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ABSTRACT

This document presents the final report on the evaluation of California's model student assistance program (SAP) demonstration projects implemented in five locations across the state from July 1989 through June 1992. The report provides an overall, integrated review of the evaluation of the SAP demonstration projects, summarizes important findings from previous evaluation phases, reports evaluation activities for the project's third year, and addresses four questions: (1) how successfully did the SAPs develop their administrative structures and organization? (2) who were the students who participated in the SAPs? (3) how effectively did the SAPs deliver services to students? and (4) did the SAPs have a positive impact on participating students? Section 1 of the report provides an introduction to the SAP project. Section 2 presents a review of the political and organizational development of the demonstration projects. Section 3 provides a summary of the 1990-91 process evaluation. Section 4 details the third-year evaluation effort which was dedicated to the evaluation of the impact on students of the SAP demonstration projects. Key issues include the development of the evaluation methodology, the analysis of data, and the interpretation of results. Section 5 includes an integration of all 3 years of evaluation findings, providing some of the insights and recommendations regarding the demonstration projects and the functioning of SAPs. (NB)

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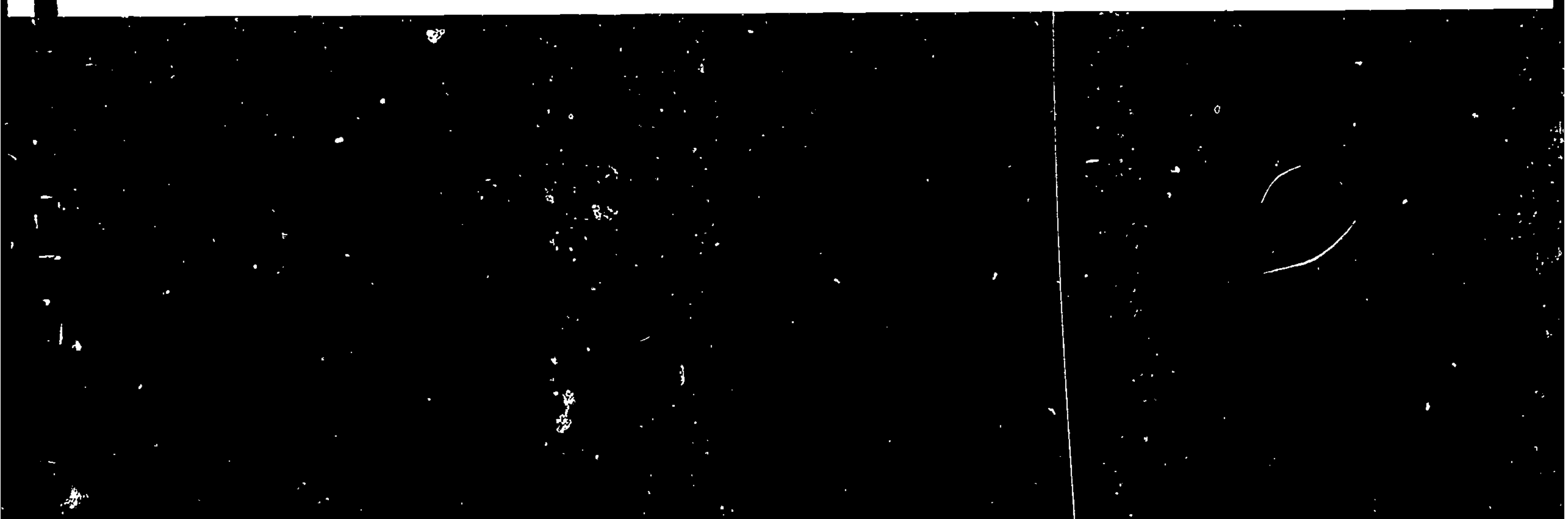

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Denise M. Houle

May, 1993

Sponsored by the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs

Student Assistance Program Demonstration Project Evaluation: Final Report

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the final report on the evaluation of the model student assistance program (SAP) demonstration projects. These projects, funded by the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (DADP), were implemented in five locations: Clovis Unified School District, Mariposa County Unified School District, a consortium of four unified school districts in Mendocino County (led by the Mendocino County Office of Education), Pajaro Valley Unified School District, and the San Dieguito Union High School District. The funding for these projects began in July 1989 and continued through June 1992.

Purposes of the Final Report

First, this report provides an overall, integrated review of the evaluation of the SAP demonstration projects. This has been a long, and complex, evaluation. It is important to provide an overview of the development of the evaluation and the overall strategy that has guided its conduct.

Second, this report summarizes some of the most important findings from previous phases of the evaluation. For complete findings, and in those instances where more detailed findings are helpful, the reader is referred to the previous evaluation reports.

Third, the evaluation activities for the third year are reported in detail. The third year of the evaluation was the Outcome evaluation. The key activities in this year included developing the measurement instruments, forming a control group, and assessing the impact of SAP activities on the students.

Finally, this report addresses four general questions:

1. How successfully did the SAPs develop their administrative structures and organization?

2. Who were the students who participated in the SAPs? Did the participating students represent a cross section of the student body, or were the participating students somehow a specialized subpopulation?

3. How effectively did the SAPs deliver services to students? What kinds of services were delivered? Were those services appropriate given the students' life situations?

4. Did the SAPs have a positive impact on participating students?

Organization of the Final Report

The organization of the final report reflects the purposes of the report as outlined above. In Section 2, a review of the organization and development of the demonstration projects are presented. This section draws upon work done in the evaluation process.

Section 3 provides a summary of the 1990-91 Process evaluation. The Process evaluation findings played a significant role in shaping the conduct of this year's evaluation efforts. The Process evaluation was quite informative about the functioning and organization of the projects.

Section 4 details the third-year evaluation effort which was dedicated to the evaluation of the impact on the students of the SAP demonstration projects. This section represents the heart of the evaluation project. Key issues in this section are the development of the evaluation methodology, the analysis of the collected data, and the interpretation of the results. To the best of SWRL's knowledge, this evaluation is the first conducted of a SAP using an experimental approach.

Section 5 includes an integration of all three years of evaluation findings. This section goes beyond a strict interpretation of the data presented in Section 4 and provides some of the insights and recommendations regarding the demonstration projects and the functioning of SAPs.

Limitations of the Final Report

This evaluation has made a significant contribution to answering many of the important questions regarding the effectiveness of SAPs. This report provides evidence that SAPs contribute to a reduced level of alcohol and drug use, and can help students with several important social/psychological issues. Unfortunately, there are other student outcomes (e.g., improvements in family functioning) that are of interest but which could not be answered by this evaluation.

Also, there is always the need for replication of findings. Any single study, because it could be taking advantage of chance or unusual occurrences, can provide unreliable results. This is true in this evaluation. These projects were selected because they were the best possible projects. The projects were managed by highly motivated, creative, and effective individuals. If SAPs were more widely disseminated across California, the quality of management would not be as uniformly high. Thus, it is conceivable that the quality of work found in these projects would not be matched with highly disseminated projects.

It also should be noted that throughout this evaluation, SWRL has not emphasized differences among the projects. Instead, site differences have been minimized in previous reports, while commonalties have been accentuated. This strategy has worked well to ensure the maximum amount of trust during the evaluation. Because of substantial overlaps among the projects in terms of their operations and structures, there is probably more to learn from an analysis of the

commonalties of the projects than from their differences. However, differences related to significant findings are noted in this report.

SECTION 2: THE POLITICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECTS

The Communities

This section provides a short analysis of the demographic, economic, social and political characteristics of the cities/counties hosting the SAP demonstration projects. Tables 1-3 provide a summary of much of the information.

Clovis

Clovis is a medium-sized, rapidly growing suburb of about 50,000 people north of Fresno. The Clovis Unified School District (USD) covers a large geographic area, including many unincorporated areas of Fresno County. However, most of the students live within the city limits. Clovis was one of the two most economically affluent SAP sites.

There were 23,856 students (K-12) in Clovis USD during the 1991-92 school year. There are two high schools, two intermediate schools, and one continuation school in the district; all of these schools participated in the SAP project. While the district is generally affluent, there are distinct socioeconomic differences between the two high schools and between the two middle schools. One of the high schools and one of the middle schools are located in an area with a distinctly higher socioeconomic status than their counterparts. The contrast is that of an upper-middle class population vs. a middle-class population; none of the schools could be described as having a large population of poor children. However, the differences among the schools were reported to create some competition and stresses within the district.

Mariposa County

Mariposa County is a small, sparsely populated county located about one hour's drive northeast of Fresno. Mariposa is rural, and many of the families in the county are poor. The school system in Mariposa is organized through the county schools. There are no other school districts in Mariposa County, and there are no incorporated cities.

The primary industries in the county are tourism and agriculture. There are reports of a significant amount of illegal drug production and drug use in the more mountainous, isolated sections. Reportedly, drug production consists primarily of methamphetamine and marijuana cultivation.

Table 1
Demographic and Economic Characteristics of the Communities Hosting the SAPs

Characteristics	Clovis	Mariposa County	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Deguito
Location	Immediately north of Fresno.	Forty-five miles northeast of Fresno.	About 120 miles north of San Francisco on Hwy. 101.	Located in Aptos and Watsonville along Hwy. 1, just south of Santa Cruz.	Located in Encinitas, 20 miles north of San Diego on Interstate 5.
City/county population size	City: 50,323	County: 14,302	County: 80,345	City: 40,160	City: 55,386
Population makeup of SAP site (either city or county, as appropriate)	Black: 1.7 Asian: 5.5 Nat. Am.: 1.4 White: 83.1 Other: 8.3 Hispanic: 16.3	Black: 0.8 Asian: 0.9 Nat. Am.: 4.5 White: 92.5 Other: 1.3 Hispanic: 4.9	Black: 0.6 Asian: 1.2 Nat. Am.: 4.1 White: 89.6 Other: 4.5 Hispanic: 6.2	Black: 0.7 Asian: 4.9 Nat. Am.: 0.9 White: 63.9 Other: 29.6 Hispanic: 48.5	Black: 0.6 Asian: 2.9 Nat. Am.: 0.4 White: 89.4 Other: 6.7 Hispanic: 15.2
Area's economic activity	Mixture of service industries and agriculture.	Tourism and agriculture. Significant economic activity in illegal drug activities. Generally weak economy.	Tourism, agriculture, and forestry. Generally weak economy. Rates of poverty and unemployment often are double the California average.	Tourism and agriculture. Generally weak economy.	Mixture of service and manufacturing.

Note. In 1990 census data, individuals are counted as either Black, Asian, Native American, White, or Other, and can simultaneously be included in the Hispanic category. As a result, percentages of the first five categories [excluding Hispanics] add to 100%.)

Mariposa County had 2,452 (K-12) students during the 1991-92 school year. There is one high school, with approximately 450 students, and one middle school with approximately 225 students. The elementary schools that feed into the middle and high schools are quite isolated. The high school and middle school are both located in the community of Mariposa (the city is not incorporated), which has about 3,500 people.

Mendocino County

The Mendocino County SAP was organized as a consortium among four districts in the County: Ukiah USD, Willits USD, Mendocino USD, and Fort Bragg USD. Mendocino County is generally rural and economically depressed. Unemployment and other economic indicators consistently show that the county performs worse than California as a whole. In fact, the percentage of unemployment often is double that of the California average. During the entire 1989-92 time span of the SAP demonstration project, the county suffered economically.

Ukiah, which is the county seat, is the largest community. Ukiah USD has the largest high school by far, with 1,786 students in the 1991-92 school year. The other three districts, and their high schools, are significantly smaller, averaging only 488 high school students in the last school year. The smaller communities are geographically somewhat isolated from the rest of the county, with trips of an hour or more to get to Ukiah. This geographic isolation had a significant impact on the development and structure of the SAP. It required that the SAP be developed essentially as four parallel programs, which operated fairly independently, although they are all managed through the Mendocino County Youth Project (MCYP). MCYP is a private, nonprofit organization that was subcontracted by the Mendocino County Office of Education to manage the SAP.

Mendocino County is primarily white, with about 15% of the population being Hispanic. There is a small percentage of Native Americans (approximately 4%). There were virtually no blacks or Asians. As might be expected from the poor economic conditions in the county, there is significant evidence of low family incomes for the students. About 45% of the students received free or subsidized lunches; about 20% of the families with children enrolled in the high schools received AFDC.

Pajaro Valley

Pajaro Valley Unified School District is located south of Santa Cruz. It serves the communities of Watsonville and Aptos. There are distinct socioeconomic differences between Watsonville and Aptos. Watsonville is significantly less affluent and has a large Hispanic population. About fifty-

six percent of the population are Hispanic. About 33% of the students have limited English proficiency (LEP). Economically, the area is somewhat depressed. The economy in the local area is based on tourism and agriculture. Aptos, which is not an incorporated city, is about one fifth the size of Watsonville (8,000 vs. 32,000 residents) and is best characterized as a upper-middle class bedroom community that has a much smaller proportion of minority residents. Economically, Aptos appears prosperous. From information provided by key informants, Aptos often does not see itself as being a part of the greater Watsonville community despite the fact that it is linked to Watsonville through the school system.

San Dieguito

San Dieguito Union High School District is about 20 miles north of San Diego along Interstate 5 in the community of Encinitas. This area is fairly affluent and is largely white. There is a growing Hispanic and Asian community in the area. Many of the students have parents who commute into San Diego for employment. Although Encinitas has its own distinct identity, it is rapidly becoming a suburban community of San Diego. This district is probably the most affluent of all of the SAP sites.

The Organization of the SAPs

This section provides an overview of the basic structure and organization of the SAP demonstration projects. There was substantial variation in how the programs were organized and implemented. The variations in structure and operation can, in many cases, be traced to the social and political characteristics of the SAP settings. Table 2 summarizes the organizational characteristics of the SAPs.

Clovis

Clovis organized and implemented its SAP throughout the district, in all three high schools and both middle schools. The program began in spring 1989, with a pilot program instituted at Clovis High School. Because of the pilot program's success, the decision was made to apply for funding through DADP. Except for Mariposa, Clovis had the least amount of programmatic experience providing "SAP-like" services to students prior to the SAP startup in September 1989.

The SAP was structured using two administrative layers. First, there was a district core team. The district core team contained members from all major stakeholder groups in the district:

Insert Table 2

Table 2
Organizational Characteristics of the SAPs

Characteristics	Clovis	Mariposa County	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Deguito
Organizational model	SAP based upon district core committee, which provided overall guidance for SAP, and on building (i.e., school site) core teams, with participation by teachers, site administrators, classified staff, and other professionals.	Counselor-based program, with services provided solely by SAP director and her assistant.	Counselor-based model. SAP counselor at school site made most decisions regarding service delivery. The SAP was embedded within the organizational structure of the Mendocino County Youth Project, which serves children of all ages with a variety of services both in and out of school settings.	Counselor-based model. SAP counselor at school site made most decisions regarding service delivery in consultation with counseling director.	Formal core team model. Core team (called Student Assistant Services/ Student Study Team [SAS/SST]) is located at the school site and is composed of all significant professional groups in the school. Core team responsible for assessment and service decisions for all students.
SAP startup date	Spring 1989	September 1989	September 1989	September 1989	September 1989
Number of years, prior to startup, that similar or related services existed	1 year	None	Over 10 years	5 years	4 years

table continues

Characteristics	Clovis	Mariposa County	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Deguito
Schools at which SAP is currently based (number of students in parentheses)	High schools: Clovis Clovis West Gateway (5,640)	High schools: Mariposa (562)	High schools: Fort Bragg Mendocino Willits Ukiah (3,249)	High schools: Aptos HS Renaissance Watsonville (3,981)	High schools: San Dieguito Sunset Torrey Pines (4,017)
	Middle schools: Kastner Clark (3,076)	Middle schools: Mariposa JH (284)	Middle schools: None	Middle schools: Aptos Hall Pajaro Rolling Hills (3,202)	Middle schools: Diegueno Earl Warren Oak Crest (2,970)
Other funding	The majority of the SAP was funded from DATE, with a small amount supplied by CUSD. Only about 36% of the program's funds came from ADP grant.	The SAP was funded primarily through the ADP grant.	The SAP was primarily funded through the ADP grant. Matching funding came from the county, primarily through the donation of services and facilities.	The SAP was funded through the ADP grant. However, the organization within which the SAP is embedded receives substantial money from a variety of other sources, including the school district, for different projects.	The SAP was funded primarily through the ADP grant.
Ongoing presence of other school-based social services	No.	No.	Yes—wide variety.	Yes—wide variety.	No.
Types of student problems encountered	Broad range.	Broad range.	Broad range.	Broad range.	Broad range.

teachers, classified staff, site administrators, district administrators, one school board member, law enforcement, community-based organizations (CBOs), and parents. The district core team was responsible for the overall policy and management of the SAP.

At the school-site level, school-site core teams were organized to coordinate the delivery of services provided to students. Representation on the school-site core teams emphasized personnel drawn from that school, such as teachers, site administrators, and school counselors.

The balance in functions and representation between the district core and school-site core teams seemed to work well. The representatives at the district level served to tie the SAP into the broader community network, facilitating referrals of students both into and out of the program. The representatives at the school-site level provided a strong base for identification and referral of students at the school. Evidence for this comes from the fact that, based on 1990-91 Process evaluation statistics, the Clovis SAP (along with San Dieguito) had the broadest mix of referral sources of any of the SAP projects.

To fund its SAP, Clovis USD combined Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Education (DATE) funds and a small supplement provided by the district itself, along with the money provided by DADP. In fact, DADP funds represented only about 35% of the actual cost of the SAP. The funds were commingled, and it was meaningless to try and identify what program activities were supported by what specific monies.

Mariposa County

The SAP in Mariposa County began functioning in September 1989. Unlike the other SAP sites, Mariposa had never provided any "SAP-type" services to its students prior to DADP funding. The Mariposa SAP always functioned using a counselor-based model. A counselor-based model emphasizes the role of the SAP counselor taking full responsibility for the assessment of students and the delivery of services without the use of a core team to support or perform any of these activities. At this site, because of the small size of the school district, the SAP director (Marilyn North for the first year of the project and Kathy Bloom for the remaining two years) functioned both as the director and as the primary service provider in the SAP. An assistant also provided direct services to students.

Because of the small size of the program, most referrals were made directly to the SAP director. The majority of referrals were self-referrals by the students, and the proportion of self-referrals increased steadily after the beginning of the program. There was no formal school-site core team to facilitate referrals or assessment of students. However, there was an informal network of school staff that were reported to be sensitive to students and helpful in getting the students in touch with the SAP.

A unique feature of the Mariposa County SAP is that the SAP functioned as a *de facto* county social service agency. Because of the general lack of services for much of the county, and because schools in Mariposa are organized at the county level, the SAP, since its inception, served as an alternative service delivery system for the mental health needs of children and families in the county. The SAP director routinely handled service calls from Child Protective Services and Mental Health, intervening on specific cases on behalf of the county. Usually this occurred when it was logistically difficult for the county worker to reach the case and it was more accessible to the SAP staff. In return, the county worked cooperatively with the SAP when asked. For example, in some cases when a student had a serious psychological dysfunction, the county worker secured appropriate hospitalization in Fresno County since Mariposa does not have a psychiatric hospital bed. The county, however, did not provide any funds to the SAP.

The physical facilities of the SAP consisted of a small office at the high school and a small office at the middle school. The offices were satisfactory for conducting all SAP activities and for ensuring confidentiality of the services. This is mentioned because the SAP director, at the beginning of the project in September 1989, had difficulty securing any physical space at the high school for the SAP. The reasons for these difficulties are discussed later in this section.

Mendocino County

The Mendocino County SAP was developed and implemented through a joint effort of the county Division of Alcohol and Other Drug Programs, the four participating school districts (which are the four largest districts in Mendocino County), and the MCYP. As mentioned earlier, MCYP is a private, nonprofit organization that was subcontracted by the Mendocino County Office of Education to manage the SAP. The county office served as the lead administrative agency for the project. It, in turn, subcontracted with MCYP to hire SAP personnel and provide services to each of the high schools in the four participating districts. This organizational structure has been used many other times in Mendocino County to provide both in-school and out-of-school services to youth. MCYP actually operates as a special project of the Mendocino County Office of Education and has staff serving in other special programs implemented at all high schools and middle school campuses in the county. In effect, the SAP demonstration project supplemented existing MCYP activities.

The MCYP SAP staff developed a core team model at each of the high schools. The core team's responsibilities included taking a lead role in maintaining, evaluating, refining, and expanding the SAP. This included the development of an effective and efficient referral process. The core teams varied somewhat across high schools, but generally included teachers, classified staff, site administrators, parents, community representatives, as well as the SAP counselor at that

high school. Much of the core team was informally in place at the high schools prior to the start of the SAP demonstration project because of the myriad of other activities that MCYP staff engage in at the school.

Pajaro Valley

A counselor-based model was implemented at Pajaro Valley Unified School District. This model evolved into its current form over the five years prior to the start of the DADP funding. In this model, each school-site had one or more SAP counselors who accepted referrals of students with problematic behavior from school staff. The SAP counselor was responsible for devising an appropriate strategy for serving the student. Unlike a core team model, where there is input from several individuals who are collectively responsible for formulating a service plan for the student, the SAP counselor assumed most or all of this responsibility.

Pajaro Valley relied heavily on interns to fill the SAP counselor positions at the school-sites. The interns were attracted to Pajaro because of the amount of training they received, the paid stipends, and the amount of supervision provided.

The SAP demonstration program was only one of several Pajaro Valley programs serving the psychological and social needs of students. An elementary SAP, known as "Kids Corner," was implemented in 1989. Several other programs focused on the prevention of tobacco use, family services, and special needs for Hispanics, that were managed out of the same office managing the SAP.

In July 1991, the SAP became a private, nonprofit agency that took over most of the activities carried out by these programs. The rationale for moving these projects out of the school district and into a private, nonprofit agency was that it provided greater freedom, flexibility, and funding opportunities. This was done on a friendly, cooperative basis with the school district.

San Dieguito

San Dieguito adopted a classic core team model for its SAP project. In many ways, San Dieguito was the typical textbook example of a structure for a SAP. The SAP was implemented at each of the middle and high schools in the district. The SAP developed, at most school-sites, into a stable and comprehensive system. In the San Dieguito system, each student who was identified for any unacceptable behavior was referred to the assistant principal. The assistant principal, in turn, decided whether the referral needed only disciplinary action or whether the student should be referred to Student Assistant Services/Student Study Team (SAS/SST) located at that school-site. The SAS/SST group was responsible for conducting a comprehensive review of all information

that could be gathered as to why the student was not functioning well in school. After review by the SAS/SST, the student could be referred to special education classes, or to SAP services, or another appropriate referral could be made. In effect, the SAS/SST was organized to act as a funnel through which all students exhibiting difficulties at school must pass. There was a conscious effort to make use of the SAS/SST structure to increase the integration of all student services in the district.

Once referred to the SAP by the SAS/SST, the student was assessed by the SAP counselor at the school-site to determine what were the most appropriate SAP services for the student. A variety of options, including on-campus groups, individual counseling, and referral to outside service providers, were available at that point. Specific procedures ensured that parents became appropriately involved with the student's services, and the teacher(s) who initially referred the student were provided reasonable feedback. In addition, the SAS/SST systematically conducted a follow-up on the progress of the student.

The Social/Political Context of the Program

This section provides a review of the social/political context of each of the SAP programs. As mentioned earlier, there is evidence that, in many cases, the social/political context of the program has played a major role in shaping the structure and organization of the program. This section looks at how the social/political landscape has influenced project implementation. Table 3 summarizes the information.

Clovis

The Clovis SAP had good political support within the district for three reasons. First, the Clovis SAP began its development with a strong philosophical statement supporting the need for services to students who were at risk of school failure because of social or psychological problems. The district formally recognized that a student's dysfunctional personal life can seriously hamper his or her academic performance. This argument was compelling in Clovis because this district has traditionally emphasized norms supporting strong academic achievement.

A second reason for the strong political support for the SAP in this district was the demonstrated need for services for students, which was found in the pilot SAP developed at Clovis High School. The pilot rapidly identified many students who benefited from SAP services. This district reportedly has a history of denial of widespread alcohol and other drug (AOD)/ psychological problems. The rapid growth of the pilot project did much to break through that denial and cement district support.

Table 3
The Political Context of the SAPs

Characteristics	Clovis	Mariposa County	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Deguito
Support of the SAP by site administrators	Good support.	Weak support.	Good support.	Good support.	Generally good support with significant problems with academic counselors at one school site.
Support of the SAP by district/county administrators	Good. The SAP appeared to be well-accepted and supported by district administrators.	Weak. The SAP did not appear to be well-supported by county administrators.	Good. The SAP was integrated into the schools along with a variety of other social service programs.	Good. The SAP was integrated into the schools along with a variety of other social service programs.	Good. The SAP was integrated into the schools along with a variety of other social service programs.
Integration of the SAP into school-site activities	Generally good. SAP services appeared to be accessible by all students and staff.	Good. Although there was not much administrative support, the SAP's services appeared to be easily accessible to students.	Good. The SAP's services were provided in the context of other social services located at the schools.	Excellent.	Excellent.
Community support of the SAP	The SAP was moderately well-integrated with CBOs and private service providers.	The SAP always has played a significant role in the county social service network. There are few private or nonprofit agencies with which to coordinate services.	The SAP was ideally integrated into other CBOs and county social services.	The SAP made very good use of CBO services and routinely received significant political support from community stakeholders.	The SAP was moderately well-integrated with CBOs and private service providers.

table continues

Characteristics	Clovis	Mariposa County	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Deguito
Other important considerations	The SAP director exercised somewhat limited control over SAP operations at the school site. Some interference in decision-making or hiring practices from site administrators.	The county school system has experienced political turmoil. In addition, budget problems continue in the county.	This SAP was operating on a shoestring budget. Rough calculations suggest that its cost per hour of service delivery was much lower than the other SAPs. Also, because of the small size of the county, and the permanence and importance of the agency within which this SAP is embedded, it was functioning in a quasi-official capacity much of the time.	This was the largest, oldest, and most complicated SAP organization of the five. The parent organization within which the SAP is embedded has reorganized itself as a private, nonprofit entity. This, it is believed, would give the organization significantly more flexibility and increase funding opportunities.	The SAP director is president of California Association for Leadership of Student Assistance Professionals.

However, perhaps the most important reason for the strong political support for the SAP in the district was due to the inclusion of numerous key school and community "players" in either an advisory role for the SAP or in direct service to the SAP through the district core team. Clovis appeared to be a district where decisions regarding school policy or operations could become quickly politicized. Often times decisions are made only after consensus has built for a potential solution. Thus, the creation of a strong network of individuals within the district supporting the SAP was probably crucial for the long-term success of the project. In short, the political base of support for the SAP was built through means that were consistent with the norms of decision making that prevail in Clovis.

Mariposa

Of all the SAP demonstration projects, Mariposa had the weakest political support. SWRL believes this was due to three reasons. First, during the 1988-90 time frame, when the program was being formed, there were two strong factions vying for control of the school district. One faction was led by a majority of the 1988-89 school board members and by the county superintendent, who had been hired by the school board in 1988. In 1990 these same school board members were forced into a recall election and the superintendent was running in a regularly scheduled electi... The opposing faction was generally led by more conservative county residents aligned with Mariposa County's continuation school principal, who was running against the incumbent for the superintendency. The net effect was that for two years the political events in the district forced every key player in the county to choose sides (Pollard, 1991). Throughout most of the crisis, the sides were relatively evenly divided, creating a political and administrative paralysis in the district. Virtually no changes in district operations and no major new initiatives in services provided to students (such as the implementation of the SAP) received attention from any administrators.

The second complication in the political history of the Mariposa SAP was that its director (North) created the SAP from scratch in early 1989 (prior to the election) by approaching the old superintendent and asking if she could write a proposal in response to DADP's RFP. The superintendent was enthusiastic and the proposal was written. However, in September 1989, when North went to the high school to begin implementing the SAP, the principal of the high school did not know who she was, what the SAP program was, or what she was planning to do at the high school. Because the high school principal was politically aligned with the conservative faction, the principal and North did not communicate well, and the principal had never been informed that the SAP proposal had been accepted and funded. This resulted in a substantial amount of resistance from the principal to the SAP.

These organizational conflicts would cause problems for most individuals trying to implement a new program. North handled the issues by operating independently within the school system. She reported directly to the old superintendent and not to the high school principal. She operated in the high school by making informal alliances with teachers and staff who would refer students for services. She also operated much of the SAP outside of the high school grounds by working with students and their families in other settings such as their homes. North had the skills and temperament to operate in this fashion, and the ability to continually negotiate the political white water in the county. Otherwise, there is a good chance that this SAP would never have been implemented. However, this strategy created a third problem for the SAP. This strategy prevented the SAP from becoming institutionalized in the school.

Mendocino County

SAP services in Mendocino County have strong political support. However, it is not the SAP demonstration project, *per se*, that is strongly supported. Instead, it is the MCYP, the organization within which the SAP is embedded, that has developed strong, and probably unbreakable, ties between itself and Mendocino County. Even though no further funding has been obtained for the SAP, SAP-like services will still be conducted under one or another of the projects being operated under the auspices of MCYP. This does not mean that the lack of funding will have no impact on services. There will probably be a significant reduction in the quantity of services delivered to youth in Mendocino County; many youth, however, still received some services if they qualified under one of the MCYP programs .

The MCYP functions as a quasi-governmental agency in Mendocino County. Ongoing interaction between the county and MCYP occurs at a variety of levels. MCYP is involved in almost every county setting in which youth are involved, including juvenile justice settings. MCYP services have become essential to the human services network of the county. In large part this is due to the poor economic conditions that are so prevalent in this county. Because of the poor economy, the county simply has never been able to fund a traditional model for social services for youth to the extent that would be desired. Because of its flexibility and its ability to attract external funding on an ongoing basis, MCYP has picked up services where the county normally would be the only major player. It appears that these circumstances enhanced the political stability and support for MCYP.

Because of these considerations, Mendocino County has not offered many significant insights into the political/social features that facilitate the adoption of a SAP. The SAP, once funded, was never subjected to the kinds of political stresses that new programs being implemented in a school setting typically encounter. The most important lesson may be that by "piggy backing" the SAP

onto already established service delivery mechanisms, the SAP essentially had a painless birth. However, in school settings without this kind of opportunity, the lessons drawn from Mendocino County do not offer much guidance.

Pajaro Valley

Like Mendocino County, many "SAP-like" services were delivered in Pajaro Valley USD prior to the funding of the SAP demonstration project. More services have been added since the demonstration project began in 1989. As a result, the crucial political/social lessons regarding the implementation of SAPs cannot be drawn from 1989 onward. The most important lessons should be drawn from the political and social issues surrounding the creation of the organization in 1984.

The most important feature of the political/social context of Pajaro Valley is that much of the program's political support came directly from the local community separate from the formal school district organization. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the strong support Pajaro Valley's programs received from parents. This support existed, in large part, because Pajaro Valley was the most successful of the five SAPs delivering services to parents. While most SAPs (including SAPs in California not participating in the demonstration project) complain that it is difficult to attract parent participation in the SAP, this was not the case for Pajaro Valley. For example, one member of the SWRL evaluation staff (Ann Bickel) observed the Pajaro Valley director (Linda Perez) hosting the *fourth* night of a four-night program for families. There were about 200 family members voluntarily participating. This is a far higher turnout than other school-based parenting or family programs are able to produce.

An important question is how Pajaro Valley was able to generate such parent participation. The director says that, in large part, the parent participation was a result of several years of communicating with and involving parents. For example, six years ago the director of the SAP spent an entire year meeting with parents in their homes, in canneries, and wherever else they could be found, asking them what they would like to see the schools offer students. This kind of long-term development is unusual, to say the least. In most California school districts (particularly in today's budget climate) there is neither the time, nor the personnel, who can effectively tackle this task. In another effort, the SAP director created the "Safe Homes" program. This was an effort involving law enforcement, which had parents in the community sign a pledge that they would not allow alcohol to be served at their children's parties and that they would provide a chaperone on these occasions. Currently, 500 families are signed up in this project.

While the above work represents building support from the grassroots, the program also effectively worked to generate support "top down." In 1984, just as the program was being organized, the director formed the "Committee of 25." This group consisted of two school board

members, teachers, site and district administrators, parents, and community leaders who worked to develop a plan for providing services to students in the community. This group helped to build a network of the key players in the community and district who would support the program.

Just as important, the director provided 30 hours of training for almost all district personnel in 1984-85, the first two years of the program's existence. This included special "study sessions" developed for school board members and senior district administrations. The director believed that the training helped sensitize these key individuals to the needs of students and the community and what the program could do to effectively and cost-efficiently provide for those needs. The director was so effective in training the key players in the community that one school board member was elected on the basis of the AOD-related needs of the district.

Community support also was developed in Pajaro Valley through an effective use of local media. There were literally dozens of stories that were reported in the local press regarding different aspects of the SAP's operations. The local media effectively "sold" the program to the community. This, of course, always has been an additional channel for reaching out to parents.

In sum, the most accurate description of the political success of this project is that it patiently and carefully built support for itself among key community groups. The careful and thorough effort put into contacting parents, training school personnel, and working with the media (among other things), paid enormous dividends to the program in terms of district support. Most importantly, parents were involved in the SAP's services at much higher rates than was observed in any other SAP program known to SWRL. In turn, this resulted in strong parent support for the program, which eventually created strong district administrative support. In effect, the project's support was built both top down and bottom up.

San Dieguito

The SAP program in San Dieguito, like the program in Pajaro Valley, was funded by DADP well after the program actually began serving students. And, as with Pajaro Valley, the important lessons come not from the implementation of the SAP since 1989, but from the implementation of the SAP since the beginning of the program's operations, in about 1985.

Like the Clovis, Mendocino County, and Pajaro Valley SAPs, the SAP in San Dieguito enjoyed considerable political support from within the district. First, the project early in its development, had a clear and unambiguous policy statement recognizing that students' AOD use was a detriment to their school achievement. The director in San Dieguito also provided a significant amount of training in AOD-related issues for all district personnel. This sensitized key players in the district to the need for services and also demonstrated how implementation of the SAP could benefit the students and the district. Finally, the director involved a wide spectrum of

district personnel in core teams. This led to a solid integration of the program into the district's operations.

The most interesting lessons to be learned from San Dieguito come from the one significant organizational problem that was encountered. According to the director, over the last six years there was considerable resistance from a substantial portion of the academic counselors to their inclusion or participation in the SAP. This resistance remained a significant problem in the SAP's operations at one of the district's high schools throughout the life of the project. This resistance apparently stemmed from two important factors.

First, the more "overt" reason for the resistance was that a "turf battle" persisted between the "academic" counselors and the SAP counselors. The SAS/SST structure, described earlier, progressively grew more comprehensive in its scope of responsibilities as the program grew. This structure was developed to work as a kind of funnel through which all students who were not performing as expected at school were passed through for assessment. As the scope of the SAS/SAP structure broadened, this inevitably infringed upon the academic counselor's responsibilities, and some resentment was generated. Part of the reason for moving toward integrating academic counseling services into the SAP appeared to be, in part, an effort to resolve this issue; if we're all on the same turf, there will be nothing left to fight over.

According to the director, a second, and probably more powerful, reason for resistance among the academic counselors was that some of the counselors were uncertain if they wanted to actually involve themselves in their students' emotional and psychological problems. The SAP counselors—and the academic counselors if they actively participated in the SAP program—ran support groups for students who had a number of problems, including AOD recovery, depression, and abuse. The director believed that, for some academic counselors who were not trained to perform this kind of service, or for whom this was simply not what they expected in choosing to become counselors, this kind of involvement created anxiety.

In summary, like the other SAPs, this SAP was politically strengthened by its ability to work closely with key players and constituencies within the district. Because most district administrators and school board members were convinced of its importance to the success of the students, this program received strong political support. The difficulties encountered with some academic counselors, while they were significant, appeared to moderate. In short, this SAP was stable and well-integrated into the district's operations.

SECTION 3: A REVIEW OF LAST YEAR'S PROCESS EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section provides a description and selected findings from the Process evaluation of the SAP demonstration projects conducted during the 1990-91 school year. This review is not an exhaustive analysis of the Process evaluation findings. Rather, this section: (a) alerts the reader to some of the more important findings; and (b) shows how the Process evaluation played a role in shaping the conduct of the 1991-92 Outcome evaluation activities. Readers interested in the full set of findings are referred to the original report (*Student Assistance Demonstration Project: Process Evaluation*, Pollard, Horowitz, & Houle, 1991).

The Purposes of the Process Evaluation

The Process evaluation was designed to assess the set of activities that occurred within and between the service providers and the students participating in the SAPs. Descriptions of the student subpopulations served, the decisions made regarding the students, and the schedule of services provided were all important aspects of this assessment. This Process evaluation addressed issues primarily related to program coverage. That is, were students in need of services being identified? Also, once identified, were services available to these students? Furthermore, the Process evaluation clarified the patterns of services provided in relation to each student's presenting problems.

As mentioned, another goal of the Process evaluation was to guide the efforts for the Outcome evaluation of the SAP demonstration projects in the coming year. To accomplish this task, careful analysis and descriptions of the monitoring and tracking systems adopted by the individual SAPs were required. The Process evaluation also addressed issues related to mechanisms for assessing the effects of services provided and following up with service recipients.

The Methodology of the Process Evaluation

A significant amount of planning was conducted at the start of the project. Meetings were held with the project site coordinators at the start of the 1990-91 school year to assess the information being collected at each site. It was determined, from data samples provided to the evaluation team as well as through discussions with site coordinators, that all sites already were collecting appropriate descriptive information on students receiving services.

However, because of organizational and administrative differences among the sites, there were significant variations in how the raw data documenting SAP operations were actually collected and

transmitted to SWRL. For example, from Mariposa County the data documenting student services were taken directly from the project director's personal appointment book, from a ledger that documents student services, and from personal inquiries with the director to clarify ambiguities in the data or to eliminate as much missing data as possible. This approach was effective in Mariposa because the director of the project provided the bulk of the services in the SAP. At the other extreme, data from Mendocino County were collected directly from its sophisticated computerized data-base system. This system tracked student intakes and services for all activities conducted under the umbrella of the MCYP. This computerized system was comprehensive, accurate, and relatively easy to access. For the Process evaluation, the data pertaining to those students participating in the SAP were simply delivered on disk to SWRL. The relevant information was then incorporated into the Process evaluation data-base.

A comprehensive paper and pencil data collection system was installed in Pajaro Valley prior to the Process evaluation. This system provided a detailed tracking system for all students participating in SAP activities and was centrally maintained. Based on photocopies of Pajaro Valley records, it was a straightforward process to translate the district's data into the Process evaluation data base. A similar situation existed for Clovis and San Dieguito. The difference between Pajaro Valley and these two sites was that the record-keeping system at Clovis and San Dieguito was decentralized. This required that records be retrieved from the different school-sites. However, once retrieved, the data were transcribed into the Process evaluation data base.

Based on the data collected from the SAP sites, a custom data base was constructed by SWRL to hold the data collected from the project sites. The data records were maintained at the level of the individual student. Information from this data base was used to describe students along a variety of demographic dimensions, relate presenting problems to actions taken, to assess the availability of services to students, and to determine if other key issues, such as confidentiality, were appropriately addressed. Student contacts from Jan. 1, 1991, to June 30, 1991, were included in the data base for this Process evaluation.

Results of the Process Evaluation

In this section, selected results are reported. (The original format of the Process evaluation report is retained here, where a specific finding is detailed along with the implications that were drawn from that finding.) The Process evaluation results are organized into two sections. First, analyses related to coverage accountability are reported. Coverage accountability represents the extent to which the SAPs were effectively reaching the student population they were designed to serve. In the next section, variables related to service delivery accountability are discussed. This section includes the bulk of the analyses provided in the Process evaluation report.

Coverage Accountability

As mentioned, coverage accountability relates to whether the students being served by the SAPs were those whom the projects should be serving. In this section, we discuss the numbers of students being served by the projects and their demographic characteristics we discussed.

Table 4
The Number of Students Served and the Amount of Services Provided to Different Student Groups

Type of students	Average number of service events	Average number of assessments	Average number of days from ID to first assessment
All students	6.66 (N = 1330)	1.04 (N = 1330)	1.77 (N = 701)
All males	5.68 (N = 482)	1.07 (N = 482)	1.74 (N = 257)
High school males	6.27 (N = 382)	1.16 (N = 382)	1.80 (N = 237)
Middle-junior high males	3.42 (N = 100)	.72 (N = 100)	1.00 (N = 20)
All females	7.21 (N = 848)	1.02 (N = 848)	1.79 (N = 444)
High school females	7.85 (N = 691)	1.16 (N = 691)	1.80 (N = 420)
Middle-junior high females	4.39 (N = 157)	.43 (N = 157)	1.58 (N = 224)

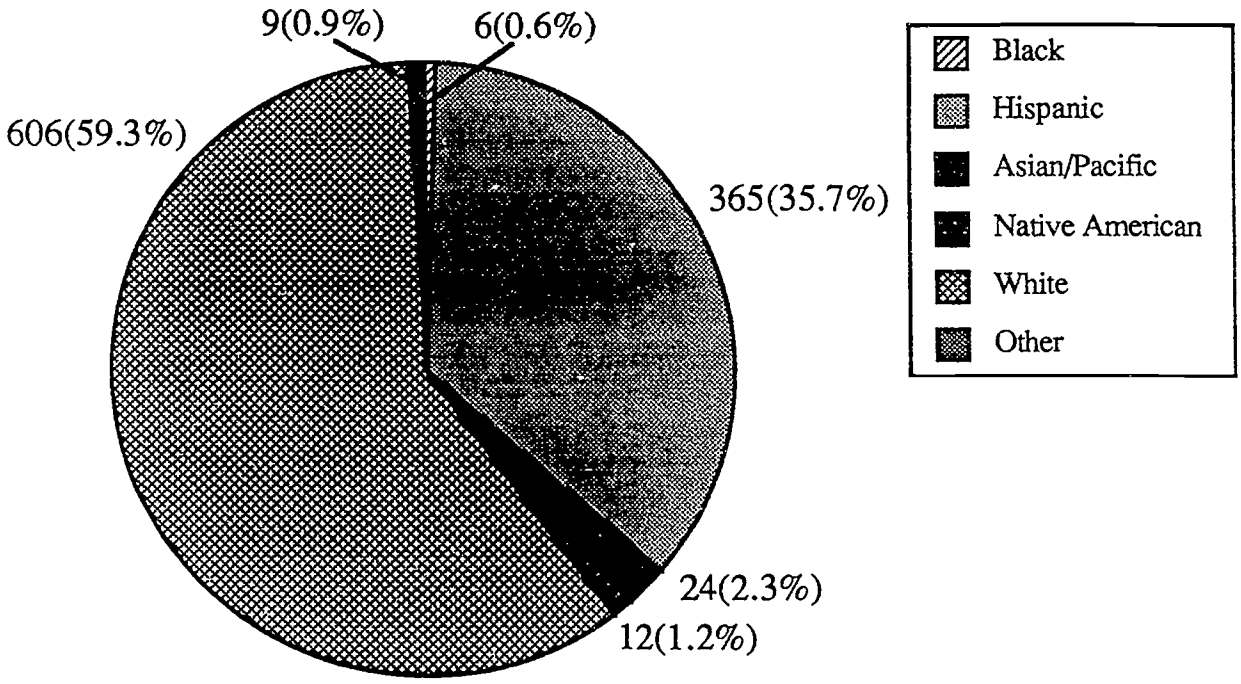
Finding: There were 1,330 students who contributed data to the Process evaluation on whom it was possible to obtain a complete set of service related data. Of this total, about two thirds (63.8%) of the students were female.
It appears there were some differences in how services were provided to different student groups. It is worth noting that the junior/middle high school students received fewer services than the senior high school students. Females appeared to receive a somewhat greater number of service events, but otherwise are similar to males.

Implication: Females were overrepresented in the population of students being served. There are several potential reasons why females were overrepresented. This may indicate that referrers were more likely to note problems among their female students; they may see problems affecting the female student as more appropriate for the SAP; or there may, in fact, have been a higher rate of problems among the female population.

One other interpretation appeared more likely, however. Because of the "broad brush" approach of these projects, many more services that are of interest to females were offered in these SAPs than in SAPs of more limited scope. Adolescent females may simply be more willing to discuss problems related to family and personal relationships more frequently than adolescent males. In fact, when SAP services are focused specifically on just AOD services, the usual finding has been that males are overrepresented in the service population and that females are in the minority.

These findings suggested that there were some service differences between the middle and high school levels. Other findings that follow in the next section support this conclusion. A discussion of the implications of these findings is postponed until those findings are discussed.

Figure 1
Ethnicity of Students Using SAP Services



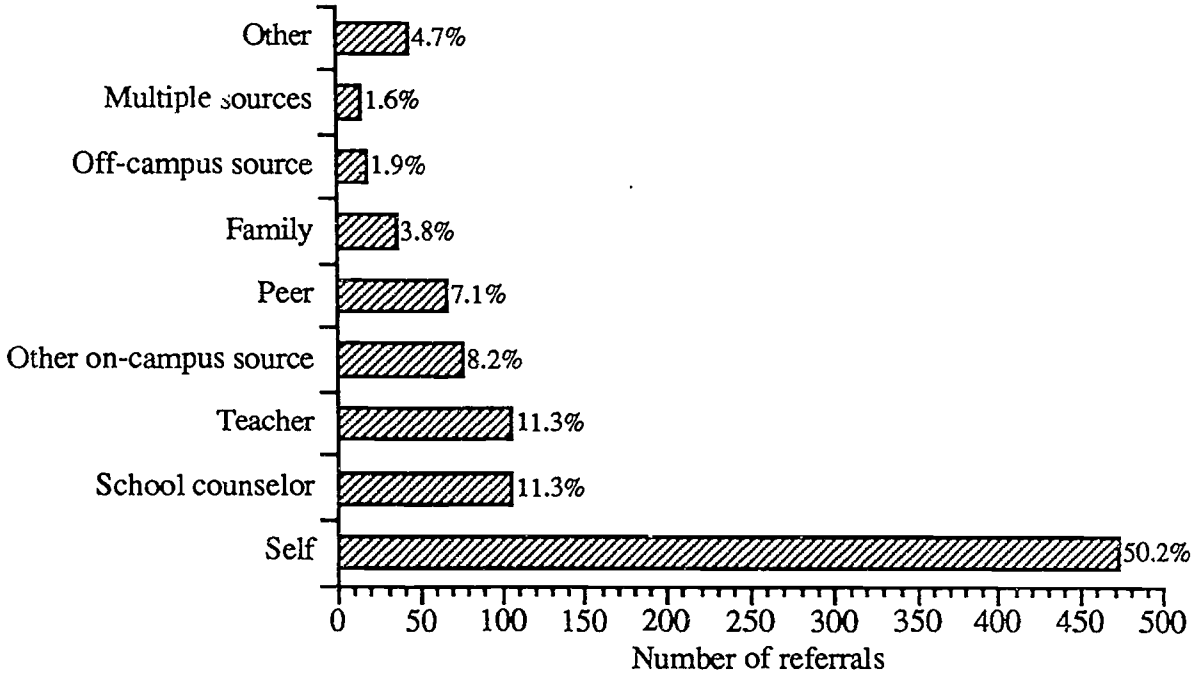
Finding: The ethnic breakdown of the students served by the SAPs was similar to the ethnicity of the communities (as measured by census data) in which the SAPs were located.

Implication: The projects appeared to fairly and equitably serve all segments of the student population as judged by their ethnicity. No particular ethnic group was notably over- or under-referred for services.

Service Delivery Accountability

In the next set of analyses, we examined issues related to the conduct of the services provided to students in the SAPs. Attention was paid to how and why the students were referred into the SAP, how quickly and efficiently services were delivered, and what kinds of services were provided to the students within the projects.

Figure 2
Sources of Referrals to the SAP



Finding: More than half of all students referred for SAP services during the 1990-91 school year (for whom referral source was noted) were self-referred (50.2%). Teachers and school counselors were the next major sources of referrals with 11.3% each. Of the students referred, 472 students (33.4%) had no referral source noted.

Implication: The fact that over half of these students were self-referred may be related to the reasons for which referrals are made (more than half of all referrals are for either emotional or family problems). Or, the proportion of referrals might also have been related to the potential for contact and familiarity with the student, coupled with how socially appropriate it was for certain persons to refer in the school setting. Self-referrals top the list, followed by teachers and school counselors, peers, and other on-campus sources. Furthermore, it appeared that specific staff, namely teachers and school counselors, may have had the responsibility of referring students to the SAP.

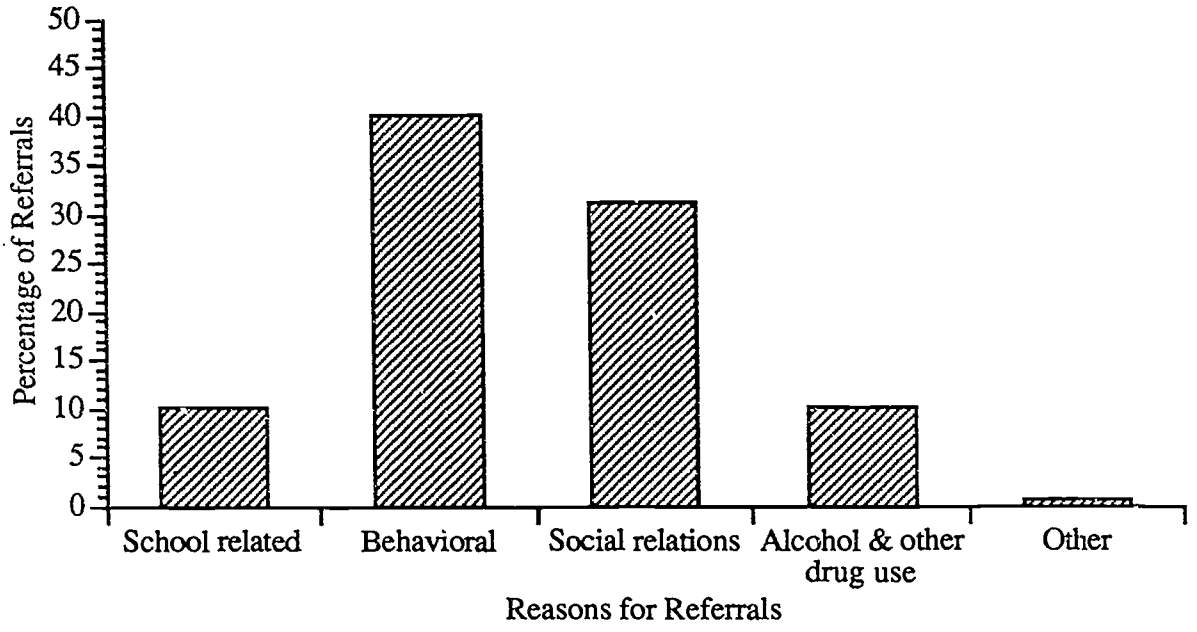
The high frequency of self-referrals has been noted by the SWRL staff at other SAP sites around California, which were not included in the demonstration project. If, in fact, self-referral is the primary means whereby students will enter

the SAP, this has substantial implications for the design and implementation of SAPs statewide. For example, a traditional SAP design calls for creating a network of school staff who can identify and refer students into the SAP. While this is desirable, the SAPs may find that facilitating student self-referral is a more effective strategy to implementing the SAP. In fact, in an analysis reported in the section on students with more serious problems, the students with more serious problems had the *highest* rate of self-referral of any student group.

It is probably relevant to this issue that SAPs started primarily as a way of helping students with AOD use. Common to students (and adults) who are AOD abusers is a denial that they have a problem. Thus, with chemical dependency, self-referral is not very likely; therefore, SAPs started out emphasizing the need for an effective referral network. With the "broad-brush" model that was been adopted in these demonstration projects, the lack of self-referral was not an issue.

It should be noted that the reasons for referral to the SAP were the reasons used by the referral source to indicate why the student was approached (or should have been approached by) the SAP for services. These reasons typically reflected observable, specific behaviors, indicative of greater emotional distress. These referral reasons do not necessarily match the actual underlying issue/causative factor(s) for the observed behaviors and symptomatic actions.

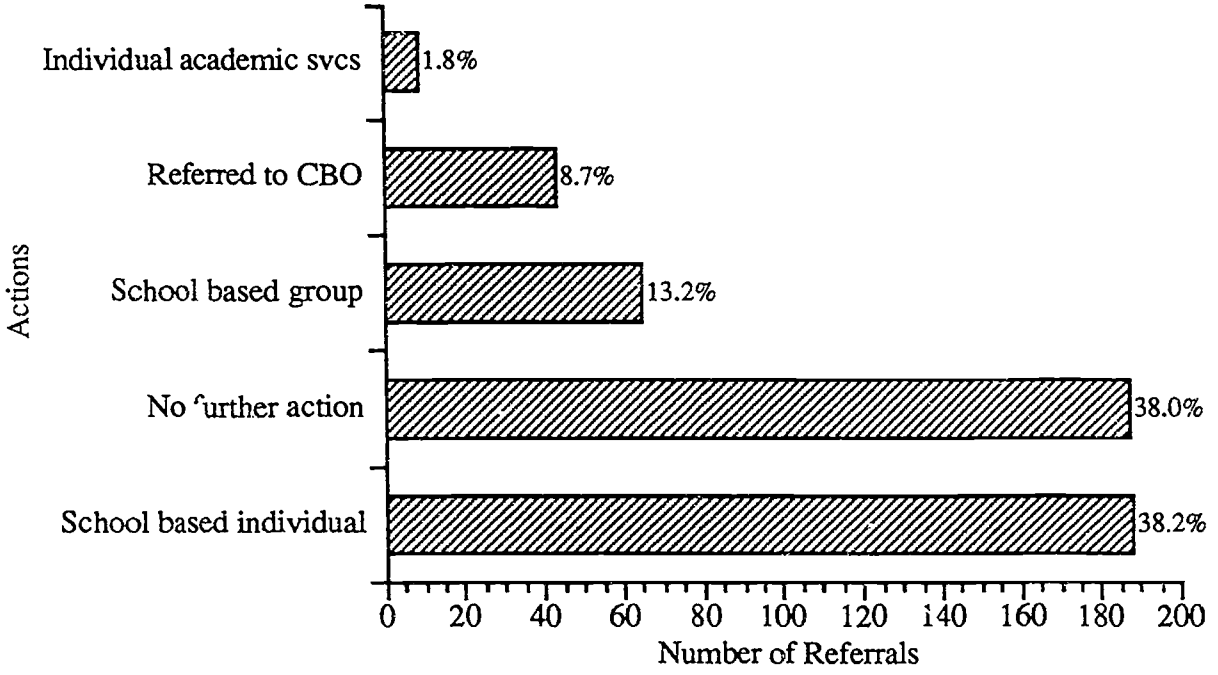
Figure 3
Reasons for Referrals (Including All Self-Referrals) to the SAP



Finding: The most often cited reason for referrals to the SAP was for behavioral problems (noted more than 40% of the time). Behavioral problems included antisocial behaviors in the classroom, overt depression and/or withdrawal, other overt emotional symptoms, physical symptoms, poor attention skills, and criminal behavior (e.g., vandalism). Social relations was indicated as the referral reason when the student's problem focused primarily on problems in his/her relationships with other people, including family members. AOD problems are noted approximately 10% of the time, as are school-related issues (including attendance, academics, and language problems). There were 442 students for whom no referral reason was noted (31.3%).

Implication: Judging from the results, the SAP projects appeared to help the student with a variety of behavioral and social problems that became apparent in the school setting. Further, this finding documents that by the second year of the SAPs operations, the projects had successfully created "broad-brush" programs, which were reaching students with a variety of problems. Thus, these SAPs seemed to fulfill the goal of exploring nonacademic solutions to academic problems, which is often stated as a goal of SAPs. Despite the opportunity to note multiple reasons for the referral, over 75% of the students referred for school-related problems had no other problem noted.

Figure 4
Actions Taken by the SAP at First Assessment



Finding: The actions taken most often in dealing with student problems were individual counseling (school based) and no further action, which together accounted for more than 75% of the referrals dealt with in the Process evaluation data. It should be noted that *no action* included continued monitoring by school staff, which accounted for 46 (24.6%) of the 187 referrals in this category. Less than 10% of the students were referred for services outside the school setting. Of the students referred, 922 (65.2%) had no assessment outcome noted.

Implication: Schools participating in this project used a one-to-one counseling model as the intervention of choice in the treatment of most student problems. Only 13.2% of the students were referred to groups in the school. This finding was disconcerting considering the strong effects noted in the research literature of peer programs in helping students with problems.

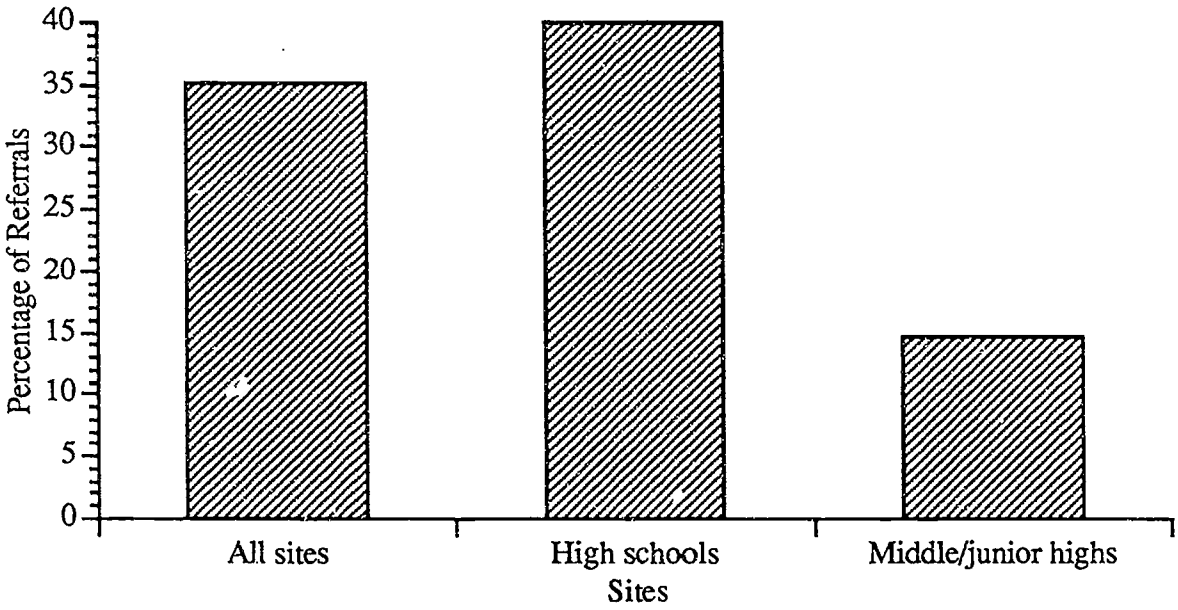
There seemed to be a high proportion of students for whom no further action was recommended by the SAP. Less than one fourth of these students were expected to receive continued monitoring by school staff. This high rate of inaction may have been due to the lack of options for dealing with students.

The low rates of use of community-based organizations could indicate a lack of potential referral options (a serious problem in a site like Mariposa) or may positively reflect the projects' ability to handle their students' problems in-house. In the data collected related to students who were assessed a second time, the proportion referred to services outside the school setting increased to 23.4% at the second assessment. This indicated that schools prefer to attempt to deal with students internally first and use outside resources as a second option. However, a second or third reassessment was probably associated with students who were experiencing more severe difficulties, and referral to outside professional services might have been expected for that reason.

Students With Serious Problems

A student was classified as having a serious or major problem if any of the following were noted in the presenting problems list: parental AOD use, sibling AOD use, family divorce/breakup, sexual abuse, physical abuse, severe depression, grief or loss, pregnancy, personal trauma, delinquency, and/or gang activity. Because of the importance of quickly identifying and serving students who are in serious distress, special analyses looked at some of the service delivery features associated with these students.

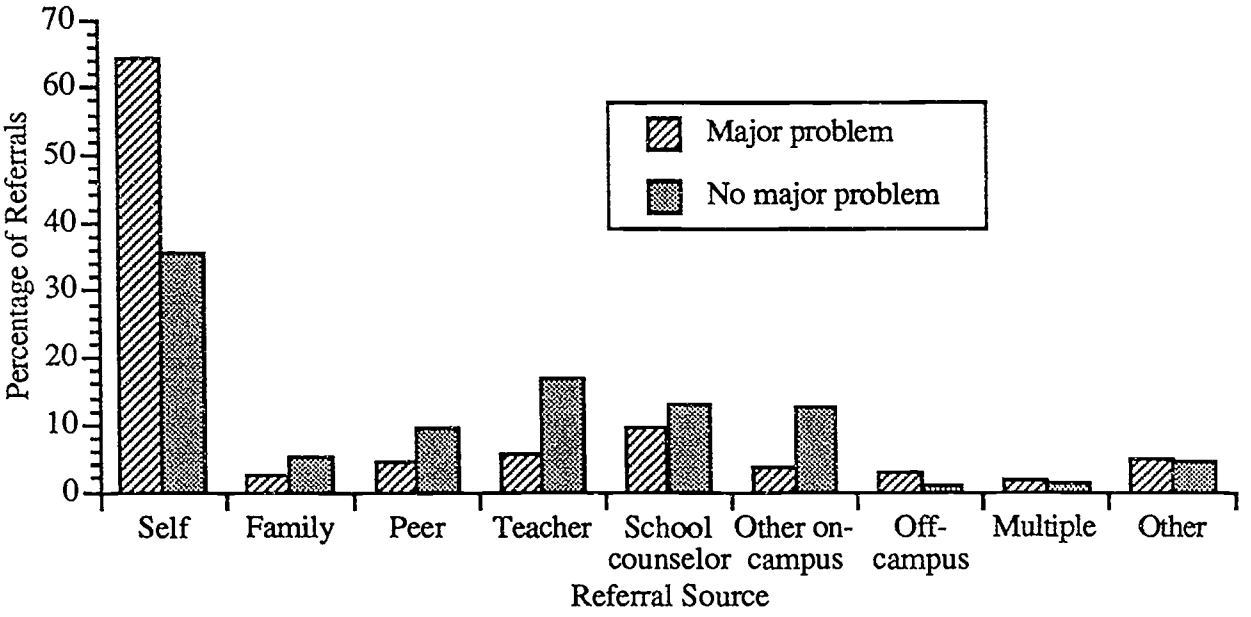
Figure 5
Proportion of All Referrals With Serious Problems



Finding: Approximately 35% of all referred students were identified as having major problems. Forty percent of the high school students and 14.7% of the middle/junior high students were classified as having major problems.

Implication: The proportion of the referrals of students with major problems to SAPs was much higher in the high schools than middle/junior high schools. These students were recorded as more likely to be dealing with a number of the issues in the major problem list. In addition, by the time these students reach high school the problem was more likely to be salient. That is, it was more likely to be of higher severity, more likely to be acted cut in the school setting, and more likely to be of significance to the students themselves.

Figure 6
Referral Source



Finding: Approximately 64% of students with major problems self-referred compared to 35.6% of students without major problems.

Implication: Students with major problems were almost twice as likely to self-refer as students without major problems. This was probably due to several reasons. First, the greater distress caused by severe problems prompted the student to seek services. Also, the major events associated with this type of student (e.g., death, family violence) were more concrete and recognizable to students as a reason for seeking out services. Because these students were probably more aware of their problem, and if they sought out services promptly, there was not much time for the students' problems to be noticed by others at school. Thus, they tended to be self-referred rather than referred through someone else. Students with major problems also were three times more likely to be referred from off-campus sources (typically, law enforcement) as students without major problems, although referrals from off-campus sources were infrequent. This seems appropriate considering the types of problems for which students from off-campus sources were typically referred (Figure 6).

Table 5
Amount of Services Delivered to Students With Serious Problems

Type of students	Average number of service events	Average number of assessments	Average number of days from ID to first assessment
All students	6.65 (N = 1358)	1.05 (N = 1358)	1.76 (N = 717)
All males	5.58 (N = 492)	1.08 (N = 492)	1.74 (N = 262)
Males, not serious problem	3.68 (N = 341)	.84 (N = 341)	2.19 (N = 135)
Males, serious problem	9.87 (N = 151)	1.64 (N = 151)	1.26 (N = 127)
All females	7.25 (N = 866)	1.04 (N = 866)	1.77 (N = 455)
Females, not serious problem	5.30 (N = 318)	.71 (N = 318)	2.26 (N = 196)
Females, serious problem	10.62 (N = 548)	1.61 (N = 548)	1.41 (N = 259)

Finding: It appeared that the service delivery times, in general, were quite prompt for all students. Students appeared to receive services quickly after they were identified. More importantly, students who were identified as having more serious problems received more services, received more assessments, and received quicker assessments than students who were recorded as having less serious problems.

Implication: The implication of these findings is straightforward. By their second year of operation, the SAPs were doing a credible job at identifying those students who were reporting more serious presenting problems, and the SAPs appeared to be adjusting their service delivery patterns appropriately when such a student was encountered. In general, they appeared to be delivering services to students about as quickly as could be expected.

Conclusions to the 1990-91 Process Evaluation

In the Process evaluation analyses, SWRL undertook a detailed look at the demographic characteristics of students being served, the kinds of problems the students brought to the SAPs, the referral system that funneled the students into the system, and how the SAPs served the students once they were identified. The following summarizes the key findings and conclusions:

- By the second year of the SAPs' operations, **students were being served by the SAPs in rough proportion to their sex and ethnicity in the overall student population.** There did not appear to be any student subpopulation that was significantly under- or over-served by the SAPs as they were conducted in the 1990-91 school year. Female students, in general, received more of the services. On average, about 10% of each of the school's students were being served by the SAPs during the Process evaluation.

- By far, **the most important source of referrals for the SAPs was from self-referrals.** This source of referral increased in importance when consideration of the seriousness of the student's presenting problem was made; self-referrals made up an even higher percentage of the referrals with students who reported more serious presenting problems, such as family violence, personal trauma (e.g., rape), family divorce or breakup, or delinquency. Teachers, school counselors, and other on-campus sources made up the next three most important referral sources.

- The implication of the above conclusion is that **the SAPs did a very good job establishing a high level of credibility and trust with the students in a short time period.** Without this level of credibility and trust it is highly unlikely that the students would have disclosed such serious and emotionally painful experiences and feelings.

- **About one third of the students were recorded as having a serious personal problem when they entered the SAP.** The project directors reported to SWRL staff that large numbers of students were bringing very serious problems to the SAP. The data recorded by the Process evaluation supported this observation.

- **On average, the students received about 6.6 service events.** The average wait from the identification of the student to his/her first assessment was less than two days. There were no significant differences in these figures between males and females or between middle and senic - high school students. However, as would be hoped, there were significant differences between the students who were judged to have serious presenting problems and the remaining students. **For the more serious students, there was a substantial increase in the number of service events, the number of assessments increased, and there was a shorter time lag between identification and the first assessment event.**

- **The two most frequent reasons for referring the students to the SAP were (a) behavioral problems and (b) social relationship problems.** Behavior problems accounted for about 40% of the referrals, and included antisocial behaviors, students who were seen as overtly depressed and/or withdrawn, other overt emotional symptoms, physical symptoms, poor attention skills, and criminal behavior. AOD problems were noted about 10% of the time. Students in high school were more likely to have multiple problems noted in their records.

- **The most frequently noted actions taken at assessment were (a) referral of the student to school-based individual services or (b) "No Further Action."** The "No Further Action" category included a specific category for continued monitoring of the student by the SAP staff even though no specific service was immediately going to be provided. The "No Further Action" category dropped in frequency among students who were noted to have serious problems.

Overall, it appears that by the second year of their funding, the SAPs were functioning as planned. They were serving all segments of their student populations; they were successfully identifying a large proportion of students who were reporting serious problems; and they were serving all students efficiently and frequently. Few, if any, organizational problems could be identified in the Process evaluation. The only concern that was identified at this point in the evaluation was that some of the project sites could improve their record-keeping systems. It was anticipated that with the demands placed upon them by the upcoming Outcome evaluation in this area, a considerable amount of the Outcome evaluation effort would be devoted to improving these systems.

SECTION 4: THE OUTCOME EVALUATION

This section of the report details all activities that occurred as part of the 1991-92 school year's Outcome evaluation effort. The third year of the evaluation focused on measuring the effectiveness of the demonstration SAPs. It is by far the most important year of the evaluation. Prior to measuring program outcome, it is important to confirm that the services were being delivered as intended. In other words, unless it's certain the project was delivering services as designed, it's unfair to test whether the project was successful.

The Delivery of Program Services

The activities documenting program implementation replicate a subset of the analyses conducted as part of the 1990-91 school year's Process evaluation. The primary question for the Outcome evaluation is whether program services were delivered as intended to the participating students. Also, did the SAPs provide enough services to make it plausible that the program could produce beneficial effects? Other Process evaluation issues, discussed in detail last year, were not crucial to this phase of the evaluation. For example, there was no reason to believe that referral patterns would change significantly from year to year. As a result, an analysis of referral sources or examining the relationships between referral sources and presenting problems was not the focus of this year's evaluation effort.

Student Demographics

Table 6 shows the number of males and females from both the middle school and high school levels participating at each SAP site. There was a preponderance of females participating in the evaluation, with about two thirds of the students being female. This was particularly true for Mariposa at the high school level, where more than four out of five students were female.

The student demographics were based on all students who entered the SAP during the pre-test phase of the project. Note that about 11% of the students did not have their sex recorded in the file, resulting in missing data.

Delivery of Services

Table 7 summarizes the delivery of services for those students participating in evaluation through the post-test phase. The information in Table 4.2 is broken down by whether the student entered the SAP with what was classified as a serious presenting problem. A student was classified as

Table 6
The Numbers of Male and Female Students Participating in the SAPs at the High School and Secondary School Levels by Each District

	Female	Male	*N*
All Students	**.66**	**.34**	**905**
High School	**.72**	**.28**	**559**
Clovis	.73	.27	114
Mariposa	.81	.19	53
Mendocino Co.	.79	.21	178
Pajaro Valley	.66	.34	97
San Dieguito	.60	.40	117
Middle/Junior High	**.57**	**.43**	**346**
Clovis	.54	.46	149
Mariposa	.39	.61	38
Pajaro Valley	.71	.29	94
San Dieguito	.54	.46	65

Note. Total cases = 1020.
Note. Missing cases = 115 or 11.3%.
Note. Mendocino County had no middle schools in the evaluation.

having a serious presenting problem if any of the following were noted in the presenting problems list: parental AOD use, sibling AOD use, family divorce/breakup, sexual abuse, physical abuse, severe depression, grief-related problems, pregnancy, personal trauma, delinquency, and/or gang activity. Because of the importance of quickly identifying and serving students who are in serious distress, the evaluation has consistently looked at some of the service delivery features associated with these students.

Table 7

The Average Number of Days from ID to First Service, and the Average Number of Total Service Events, Individual Service Events, and Group Service Events

		Service events			
	Days	Total	Individual	Group	N
For All Students	**2.85**	**11.35**	**2.75**	**7.52**	**820**
Not High Risk	**4.42**	**10.24**	**1.98**	**7.24**	**495**
Clovis	1.00	13.21	2.71	6.87	91
Mariposa	1.00	12.87	2.67	9.58	55
Mendocino Co.	1.04	22.06	2.55	19.51	67
Pajaro Valley	N/A	8.46	1.85	6.22	142
San Dieguito	12.45	3.43	0.97	1.72	140
Students With Serious Presenting Problems	**1.29**	**13.05**	**3.92**	**7.96**	**325**
Clovis	2.57	14.88	5.03	8.43	137
Mariposa	1.00	14.36	2.53	11.28	47
Mendocino Co.	1.00	24.10	2.62	19.86	21
Pajaro Valley	N/A	7.25	2.72	4.14	59
San Dieguito	2.00	9.70	4.11	3.93	61

Note. N/A = Not available.

The number of students on whom complete information regarding program participation could be obtained was 820 (see Table 7). This means that 200, or approximately 20% of the students, were lost from the study prior to post-test data collection. Many of these students were lost because they left the district, transferred to another school, or in some other way lost contact with the SAP program at the site during the Outcome evaluation period. Other students were lost from the study because the SAP sites failed to appropriately collect follow-up data. It is impossible to determine how many of the students were lost to each reason. In addition, one of the four school districts participating in Mendocino County dropped out of the evaluation. This loss represented a small but significant number of students.

Table 7 presents information on the number of days from identification (ID) to first service and on the total number of service events, as well as the number of individual counseling and group counseling service events. While the general service delivery pattern is similar to last year's findings, some changes are worth noting.

First, as found last year, the SAP sites provided one third more services to students with serious presenting problems than to other students.

This year the SAP sites provided more services to students. This is probably due to more efficient functioning of the programs with increased maturity, combined with improved record keeping. (Participating in the evaluation had the effect of improving record keeping.) The most active program, Mendocino County, also was the program that functioned with the smallest budget. The heavy reliance on groups is evident in Table 7, especially with Mendocino County. Group services were by far the most common service modality.

Compared to last year, there was a slightly longer time between the initial identification/referral of a student and his/her first service event. The average time was skewed higher by the inclusion of the San Dieguito data. While San Dieguito might quickly send the student through the core team process, this site apparently was much slower than the other sites to begin providing services. However, San Dieguito began services fairly promptly for the students with serious presenting problems. It is a reasonable assumption that the overall increase in the response time for the SAPs as a group is due to the larger numbers of students and services being provided in the 1991-92 school year. Because of the increasing service load, it probably was not possible to provide the immediate response that was evident in last year's Process evaluation report. Nevertheless, many of the sites initiated services within a day or two, which is very prompt compared to any other social service delivery system. In fact, the speed of service delivery is one of the most positive features of the SAPs. For example, a referral for a non-life threatening condition to county mental health services often results in an appointment in two to three weeks. In comparison, the SAPs look very good.

Based on the data in Table 7, we conclude that the SAP demonstration sites generally provided

services as intended. Given that the services were being delivered, we now turn to the effectiveness of the services.

SAP Impact on Student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use

The California Student Survey

The measure of student AOD use was the California Student Substance Use Survey (CSSUS, Skager & Austin, 1993). This instrument is used in the California Attorney General's biennial survey of student AOD use. The CSSUS, because of its repeated use in California school settings over the past eight years, has well-documented California norms for student AOD use. The CSSUS is available in both Spanish and English versions and has a reading level of approximately sixth grade.

The CSSUS measures the six-month frequency of student use for a wide variety of substances: beer, wine, hard liquor, marijuana, hashish, methamphetamine, cocaine, inhalants, cigarettes and snuff. In addition, SWRL included two CSSUS questions assessing the student's appraisal of the harmfulness of regular marijuana and alcohol use. For each of the items, students respond on a eight-point scale, ranging from not having used the substance at all in the past six months to having used the substance every day or nearly every day.

The Effects of the SAPs Upon Student AOD Use

Table 8 shows the means and number of students on whom CSSUS data was collected, both pre- and post-test. Data in this table are reported for the combined SAP sites versus the comparison site.

More students completed pre-test than post-test data. As was discussed, this is due to a combination of routine student attrition, the loss of one school district in Mendocino County, and a failure of 100% follow-up in two of the districts. Because the evaluation staff could rely on centrally maintained records for measuring service delivery, we had somewhat less student attrition when collecting that data. The need to physically recall the student for the post-test data collection on the CSSUS (and the other instruments) resulted in a small, further loss of students from the study. Overall, the SAP sites collected post-test data on 72% of the students on whom pre-test data was collected. The loss of about 28% of the students is common in evaluations conducted in multiple school-sites across multiple districts and where there is a substantial time lag from pre- to post-testing.

Table 8
Student Six-month Frequency of Use Rates on All CSSUS Items

		Pre-test		Post-test	
		n	Mean	*n*	Mean
Beer	SAPs combined	1,010	2.56	729	2.59
	Comparison site	1,042	2.16	1,498	2.67
Wine	SAPs combined	1,008	2.22	729	2.19
	Comparison site	1,035	1.92	1,508	2.38
Liquor	SAPs combined	1,007	2.03	727	2.02
	Comparison site	1,037	1.78	1,511	2.25
Marijuana	SAPs combined	1,006	1.93	726	1.96
	Comparison site	1,031	1.44	1,511	1.96
Hashish	SAPs combined	1,001	1.15	727	1.16
	Comparison site	1,032	1.11	1,511	1.34
Methamphetamine	SAPs combined	1,001	1.13	729	1.14
	Comparison site	1,030	1.09	1,509	1.34
Cocaine	SAPs combined	1,003	1.13	729	1.13
	Comparison site	1,031	1.10	1,513	1.30

table continues

		Pre-test		Post-test	
		n	Mean	*n*	Mean
Inhalants	SAPs combined	1,000	1.20	728	1.22
	Comparison site	1,030	1.21	1513	1.45
Cigarettes	SAPs combined	1,009	1.80	728	1.78
	Comparison site	1,038	1.37	1503	1.60
Snuff	SAPs combined	1,009	1.13	727	1.13
	Comparison site	1,036	1.20	1504	1.34
Marijuana harmfulness	SAPs combined	978	1.84	692	1.84
	Comparison site	1,039	1.77	1493	1.86
Alcohol harmfulness	SAPs combined	978	1.77	692	1.71
	Comparison site	1,037	1.94	1487	1.96

It also is worth noting that SWRL obtained a larger number of students at the comparison site during post-test than during pre-test. This was partially due to very rapid growth of the comparison site district. More importantly, by the post-test period, SWRL garnered greater cooperation from the individual teachers at the comparison schools, thus generating greater student participation.

The results on Table 8 indicate that the SAP sites appeared to suppress AOD use in participating students. Looking at the comparison site values first, note that for all substances, the six-month prevalence figures increased. In other words, students at the comparison schools reported increased use of all substances across time. This finding of increased use over time is expected; student use of all substances is known to increase over time throughout adolescence. It

is not until around age 19-20 that substance abuse levels off.

In contrast, the findings for the SAP sites showed that, for all substances, use levels remained stable from pre-to post-test. In other words, students from the SAP sites did not increase their substance use. It appears that the SAP sites effectively halted the increasing levels of use that would otherwise be expected in an adolescent population.

Statistical analyses confirm this interpretation. Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to test the hypothesis that the SAP sites suppressed AOD use. MANOVA is a statistical procedure contrasting the SAP sites versus the comparison sites for differences across multiple AOD substances (i.e., multiple dependen. variables). Conducting a separate analysis for each of the AOD substances would lead to an overestimate of experimental effects because of the increased likelihood of taking advantage of chance effects in the data. MANOVA corrects this problem, allowing for an accurate assessment of program effects.

The key analysis from the MANOVA is a test of the interaction between the experimental group (i.e., SAP vs. comparison site) and the measurement occasion (i.e., pre-test vs. post-test). This interaction tests the basic question of whether the two experimental groups had different rates of increase in AOD use. In other words, the MANOVA analysis can determine whether AOD use is increasing at a significantly faster rate for the comparison group than for the combined SAP sites. The results (see Table 9) showed that, in fact, the AOD use for the comparison group was increasing at a significantly faster rate than the SAP sites ($F = 3.52$, Hotelling's $T = .012$, $p < .001$). These results confirm the interpretation that the students participating in the SAPs were showing no increase in substance use, while the comparison sites were increasing use at a significantly higher rate.

Given that the overall F-test was significant, it was appropriate to examine the findings for the individual AOD substances. For all substances, the SAP sites had a significantly lower increase in use as compared to the comparison sites. The effect was strongest for beer, wine, liquor, and marijuana, probably for two reasons. First, statistically it was easier to detect an effect with these substances because of the initially higher levels of use because more students use these substances. Second, students using the other illicit substances are probably more difficult cases and would be less likely to show program effects, given the amount of SAP services being delivered.

While significant, the effect of the SAPs on suppressing cigarette and snuff use was more limited than for other substances. Also, while the SAP students showed an increasing awareness of the harmfulness of marijuana, there was no observable effect for alcohol.

For the AOD data, the difference between the SAP and comparison sites translates into an effect size of approximately .2. An effect size is a standardized metric that allows for comparison of the magnitude of program effects across different studies. An effect size of .2 is generally viewed as a modest research effect (Cohen, 1977).

Table 9
MANOVA Results Comparing Pre- to Post-test Changes in ATOD Use and Assessment of Alcohol and Marijuana Harmfulness for the SAP Sites Versus the Comparison Site

	F Test	Sig.
All substances	**3.53**	**< .001**
Beer	14.60	< .001
Wine	22.45	< .001
Liquor	17.60	< .001
Marijuana	14.78	< .001
Hashish	10.91	.001
Methamphetamine	11.32	.001
Cocaine	8.34	.004
Inhalants	6.07	.014
Cigarettes	6.59	.010
Snuff	8.04	.005
Marijuana harmfulness	8.05	.005
Alcohol harmfulness	1.89	n.s.

More useful than the effect size to policymakers is a concrete representation of the proportion of the SAP students who attained a given level of benefit as compared to the comparison group. One way to conceptualize this is by using the Binary Effect Size Differential (BESD). The BESD, in the context of this evaluation, is a measure of the proportion of the SAP group, in comparison to the comparison group, that did better than the *average* student in AOD use. An effect size of .2, through algebraic calculations, converts to a BESD of 55% for the SAP students and 45% for the comparison students. This means that 55% of the SAP students did better than the average student in avoiding AOD use in the past six months, while only 45% of the students in the comparison group did better than the average student in AOD use. The 10% differential is essentially the impact of SAP participation. Given the seriousness of AOD use, this 10% differential implies a significant, policy relevant impact.

Differences Among SAP Sites

There were substantial differences among the SAP sites in terms of the overall level of AOD use ($F = 6.31$, $p < .001$). This indicates the obvious: Some of the SAP sites had higher prevalence levels in AOD use than others. For example, Mariposa, Mendocino County, and San Dieguito all had the highest levels of beer consumption during pre-test and at post-test. It is important to remember that it is not the absolute level of AOD use that characterizes the effectiveness of the SAPs; instead, it is whether the level of use moves in an upward and downward trend relative to the SAP sites. As reported above, the SAP sites as a whole showed a general downward trend in AOD use relative to the comparison site. However, no differences in effectiveness among the individual SAP sites were observed ($F < 1.0$, nonsignificant [n.s.]) for AOD use; all of the SAP sites were about equally effective in suppressing AOD use among their participating students.

SAP Impact on the Social and Psychological Functioning Of the Students

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale

The Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (PH) is a widely used, standardized psychometric instrument that assesses the psychological and social functioning of adolescents. While titled a self-concept inventory, the PH assesses adolescent social and psychological functioning across a variety of domains. The scoring system for the PH produces a Total score and scores for several subscales: Behavior, Intellectual & School Status, Appearance and Physical Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness & Satisfaction. Because the survey had never been translated into Spanish, SWRL, with the approval of the publisher, translated and reproduced the instrument in Spanish.

The Effects of the SAPs Upon Student Social and Psychological Characteristics

Table 10 shows the pre- and post-test PH values (Total, all PH subscales, as well as a measure of inconsistency in student responses) for the combined SAP sites and the comparison site. As with the AOD scores, post-test data was collected on about 73% of the students participating in the pre-test data collection phase. In contrast to the AOD prevalence data, the pre-test results showed that the comparison site had an initial advantage over the SAP sites. (Higher values indicate better PH scores.) Because of the expense of the Piers-Harris, every third student was randomly selected at

the comparison site to complete the Piers-Harris. This resulted in a lower number of comparison-site students providing PH data as compared to the CSSUS data. However, this procedure still provided a sufficient number of students for adequate statistical power, and the random distribution of the PH to the comparison site students ensured a nonbiased sample.

Table 10 shows that, from pre- to post-test, the combined SAP sites improved on the PH relative to the performance of the comparison site. This same pattern was found with the AOD data. Compared to pre-test values, the SAP improved on all of the PH subscales. This, of course, is reflected in the SAP total score. In contrast to the SAP sites, students from the comparison site showed an improvement in two subscales (Appearance & Attributes and Popularity), while there was a decrease in the remaining subscales. On the Total score, the comparison site students showed a nonsignificant decrease.

MANOVA again was the procedure used to statistically assess the SAP versus comparison site differences. Table 11 presents these data. Overall, the assessment of the experimental group by measurement occasion interaction showed a significant result ($F = 3.60$, Hotelling's $T = .010$, $p < .001$). In other words, the SAP students significantly improved on the PH from pre-test to post-test while the comparison site students did not show improvement. In addition to the overall F value, the univariate analyses of the PH subscales showed a significant advantage for the SAP sites on the Behavior, Intellectual & School Status, Anxiety, and Happiness subscales. In short, the Piers-Harris findings support the conclusion that the SAPs were producing positive psychological and social changes in their students.

As with the AOD data, the difference between the SAP and comparison sites translates into an effect size of approximately .2. As noted earlier, this is generally viewed as a modest research effect (Cohen, 1977). Again, one of the more effective ways to understand this size of an effect is to calculate the BESD. An effect size of .2 translates into a 10% differential favoring the SAP sites. In other words, while 55% of the SAP students did better than the average student on the PH, only 45% of the students from the comparison group did better than the average student. Given that the underlying social-psychological characteristics of students are difficult to influence, a 10% differential following participation in the SAP suggests that the SAPs were effectively helping the students.

As with the AOD data, there were no important differences among the SAP sites on the PH. All appeared to have a similar effect on improving the students' PH scores from pre- to post-test.

Table 10
Student Responses on the Piers-Harris Total Score, Subscales, and Inconsistencies

		Pre-test		Post-test	
		n	Mean	*n*	Mean
Total Score	**SAPs combined**	**1,014**	**50.23**	**737**	**52.64**
	Comparison site	**596**	**54.48**	**307**	**53.10**
Behavior	SAPs combined	1,014	10.97	737	11.29
	Comparison site	596	12.11	307	11.50
Intellectual & school status	SAPs combined	1,014	10.53	737	11.11
	Comparison site	596	11.46	307	11.33
Appearance & attributes	SAPs combined	1,014	7.73	737	8.28
	Comparison site	596	7.91	307	8.04
Anxiety	SAPs combined	1,014	7.89	737	8.78
	Comparison site	596	9.37	307	9.04
Popularity	SAPs combined	1,014	7.87	737	8.09
	Comparison site	596	8.09	307	8.17
Happiness & satisfaction	SAPs combined	1,014	6.96	737	7.39
	Comparison site	596	7.60	307	7.29
Inconsistency	SAPs combined	1,020	1.98	746	1.92
	Comparison site	597	1.49	307	1.80

Table 11
MANOVA Results Comparing Pre- to Post-test Changes in the Piers-Harris Subscales for the SAP Sites Versus the Comparison Site

	F Test	Sig.
All Scales	**3.60**	**< .001**
Behavior	7.58	< .006
Intellectual & school status	5.60	< .018
Appearance & attributes	1.42	n.s.
Anxiety	13.57	< .001
Popularity	< 1.00	n.s.
Happiness & satisfaction	11.25	.001

Student Satisfaction With SAP Services

Overall Findings

The students participating in the SAPs were asked a number of questions to gauge their satisfaction with the program. Twenty items measured satisfaction with the overall program, while another 17 items asked specific questions about the students' group experience. Table 12 presents selected survey items assessing the overall program and Table 13 presents selected items assessing the group experience. In general, the students appear satisfied with all aspects of the SAPs' functioning.

For items measuring overall program characteristics, students responded using the following five point scale: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree Somewhat, 3) Neutral, 4) Agree Somewhat, and 5) Strongly Agree. The students reported positive judgments regarding staff and student confidentiality, the caring and knowledge of the staff, whether the program was helpful, and whether they were glad they participated in the program (see Table 12). Across all of the SAPs, the average score always was greater than 4.0.

Table 12
Student Satisfaction With Selected Program Characteristics

		Clovis	Mariposa	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Dieguito
Average of student responses*	Avg.	4.31	4.29	4.46	4.10	4.40
	n	218	68	108	141	134
Did the staff maintain confidentiality?	Avg.	4.53	4.46	4.75	4.43	4.39
	n	218	68	108	141	134
Did the students maintain confidentiality?	Avg.	4.30	4.49	4.60	4.26	4.18
	n	216	68	108	137	134
Was the staff knowledgeable?*	Avg.	4.39	4.44	4.51	4.22	4.13
	n	218	68	108	141	134
Was the staff caring?	Avg.	4.42	4.31	4.59	4.31	4.30
	n	217	68	108	139	133
Did the student make positive changes in program?*	Avg.	4.01	3.81	3.78	3.67	3.42
	n	214	68	106	141	132
Did the student achieve their own goals in program?*	Avg.	4.02	4.13	4.05	3.75	3.41
	n	213	68	108	141	134
Did the student benefit from the program?*	Avg.	4.27	4.26	4.43	3.77	3.81
	n	212	68	106	140	134
Were students glad they participated in program?*	Avg.	4.45	4.43	4.75	4.15	4.13
	n	210	68	106	141	133

Note. * $p < .002$

The items on Table 13 related to group characteristics. Because of the prominence of group services, these items were especially important. Students responded to these items using a three point scale: 1) Never True, 2) Sometimes True, and 3) Always True. As can be seen for the group items, the students were again uniformly positive regarding their involvement with student groups.

Differences Among SAP Sites

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted for each survey item, and for the average score across all items, to determine whether there were differences among the SAP sites. Because of the number of items, and to avoid taking advantage of chance, only those items with significance less than $p < .002$ were noted in Table 12 as being significant.

The first item on Table 12 is the average score of all survey items related to overall program characteristics. As is evident, there are some differences among the SAP sites. Analysis of variance showed that a significant difference ($F = 7.53$, $p < .0001$) existed among the sites. Mendocino County was the site most favored by students, while San Dieguito was the site least favored by students.

The first item on Table 13 represents the average value across all items relating to the students' group experience. As opposed to the overall program items, there were no significant differences among the SAP sites; the students rated all of them approximately equal. Also, there were few significant differences among the sites on the individual items (see Table 13).

Summary of the Findings

The SAP sites performed well in contrast to the comparison sites in all of the analyses. Initial review of the amount of service data revealed that the SAP sites were actually providing more services that was documented last year. And, as with last year, they were providing more services to students with serious presenting problems. The SAP sites also demonstrated a suppression of AOD use among their participating students and an improvement in psychological and social functioning as measured by the Piers-Harris. Finally, the students participating in the SAPs reported that they were generally happy and satisfied with services. In short, all of the evidence presented suggests that SAPs do help students cope with a broad range of problems.

Three other considerations must be kept in mind. Two of these considerations suggest that the SAPs may be even more effective than the current findings document. First, it should be remembered that the SAP students were compared against the student body as a whole at the comparison site. Originally, it was planned that teachers at the comparison schools would nominate

Table 13
Student Satisfaction With Selected Group Characteristics

		Clovis	Mariposa	Mendocino County	Pajaro Valley	San Dieguito
Average of student responses*	Avg.	2.57	2.61	2.64	2.50	2.55
	n	153	62	82	43	58
Could the student speak freely in the group?	Avg.	2.59	2.69	2.71	2.44	2.66
	n	153	62	82	43	58
Was gossip prohibited in the group?	Avg.	2.66	2.55	2.76	2.53	2.76
	n	153	62	82	43	58
Could the student express feelings in the group?	Avg.	2.54	2.64	2.67	2.37	2.53
	n	153	62	82	43	58
Did the students not feel "put down" in the group?*	Avg.	2.58	2.69	2.83	2.58	2.81
	n	150	61	82	43	58
Did the group help the student cope?	Avg.	2.50	2.52	2.57	2.63	2.34
	n	153	62	81	43	58
Did the group promote positive change?	Avg.	2.49	2.50	2.46	2.30	2.31
	n	153	62	81	43	58
Did the group leaders care about the students?*	Avg.	2.80	2.84	2.77	2.47	2.71
	n	152	61	81	43	58
Was there trust among group members?	Avg.	2.68	2.59	2.70	2.60	2.62
	n	152	61	82	43	58

Note. * $p < .005$

students who would benefit from participation in a SAP if one existed at that site. This process would identify a subgroup of students who would be somewhat better matched with the students participating in the SAPs. However, it was impossible to maintain teacher participation at the comparison schools throughout the evaluation process. There simply was no incentive for the teachers to actively support the evaluation. As a result, the student body as a whole at the comparison site became the comparison group.

Because of this, the comparison group was most likely made up of students who were, on average, less likely to have significant personal problems; these students also were somewhat less likely to report AOD use or poor Piers-Harris scores. The improvement of the SAP students relative to the comparison site students, even when the SAP students should be expected to report more personal difficulties, tends to strengthen the confidence that can be placed in the positive effects of the SAPs.

A second consideration, also supporting the positive results, is that the primary outcome measures consisted of AOD use and the Piers-Harris inventory. For most students, AOD use was not the primary reason they entered the SAP. Also, for many students, one or more of the Piers-Harris subscales also were not relevant to their problems. However, a standard battery of instruments that effectively captured all potential student problems could not be provided. Because AOD use and self-esteem are known to be related to life difficulties in adolescence, these measures provided the best, albeit indirect, measures of program success. However, because the AOD scale and the Piers-Harris were indirect measures of program outcomes for many students, this would also tend to decrease the likelihood of detecting positive program effects. The fact that these measures still demonstrated positive effects strengthens the conclusion that the SAPs were doing a good job providing services.

In contrast to these two considerations, one problem in the evaluation design tends to weaken the conclusions regarding positive program effects. Because students were likely to enter the SAP when their problems were particularly bothersome, many students would improve over time without any particular intervention. This effect is called "regression to the mean." This technical problem is an issue in this evaluation because the comparison group students were not identified and selected in exactly the same way as the SAP group. The regression to the mean phenomenon suggests that the SAP students would tend to perform better than the comparison site students even if they never received SAP services. However, for the AOD measures, regression to the mean—i.e., returning automatically over time to a more normal pattern of behavior—would mean an *increase* in AOD use because an increase in AOD use during adolescence is the normal pattern of behavior. The SAP students did not exhibit this pattern.

In short, the potential technical complications in the evaluation, on balance, seem to strengthen the confidence in the evaluation's positive findings. While the regression to the mean phenomena

could artificially make the SAPs look good, the other technical complications worked against the discovery of positive program effects. This situation is common in program evaluation research, where most evaluation problems work to conceal positive program effects (Lipsey et al., 1985). All things considered, SWRL believes the SAP demonstration projects did successfully intervene in the lives of the students they served and that the positive program outcomes accurately reflect program operations.

SECTION 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section addresses two key evaluation questions: (a) Were the demonstration SAPs effective in addressing a broad range of student problems?; and (b) can a standard SAP program model be identified to assist in the dissemination and implementation of SAPs in California? In addition, this section concludes with several recommendations that SWRL believes will foster the development and implementation of SAPs in California. These recommendations are equally applicable to the national SAP movement.

Did the SAPs Help Students?

Findings in the previous section suggest that demonstration SAPs did help students deal with a wide range of problems. First, the SAPs delivered services to students who were referred to the program for a variety of reasons. Service delivery was particularly efficient for students presenting serious problems. Second, the SAPs served a relatively large number of students at each site.

These results suggest modest, but important, positive effects for students participating in the SAPs. The results indicate two effects from SAP participation. First, students in the SAPs reported no increase in the AOD use, while the comparison group students showed an increase in AOD use. This increased substance use over time is a standard finding in adolescent populations. Helping students not increase use over time indicates an effective intervention. Second, the SAP students demonstrated improvements in social and psychological functioning as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, while the comparison site students showed no improvements.

Students generally reported high levels of satisfaction with the SAP services. Students also recognized important program features, such as student and staff confidentiality. They felt the services helped them with their personal problems. Students reported that group services provided positive benefits, were an emotionally safe place to explore their feelings, and they developed a strong commitment to their participation in groups.

While there were technical limitations in the experimental design, these limitations tended to work against the discovery of positive effects. In two cases, the limitations would tend to make the SAP students look worse in contrast to the comparison students, while one limitation could work to make the SAP students look artificially good. This situation is common in program evaluation research, where most evaluation problems work to conceal positive program effects (Lipsey et al., 1985). However, on balance, the potential technical complications in the evaluation seem to strengthen the confidence in the evaluation's positive findings. All things considered, SWRL believes that the SAP demonstration projects successfully intervened in the lives of the

students they served and that the positive program outcomes accurately reflect program operations.

Can a Standard SAP Program Model Be Developed?

The second major question posed for this evaluation was whether a standard SAP program model could be developed to facilitate the dissemination of SAPs throughout California. We weren't able to document the superiority of one particular SAP model, as encountered in the demonstration sites, over another. It is not clear from this evaluation that there is any organizational structure that best facilitates the delivery of services. Particularly with regard to the measured program outcomes, there does not appear to be any performance advantage by any of the SAP sites.

However, this conclusion of equivalence across the SAP sites must be tempered by one consideration. The students were more satisfied with services at some SAP sites as compared to others. The two districts that had the oldest, and most formal, organizational structures for their SAPs fared the worst in student satisfaction. But, it is not clear whether it is the formality of the organizational structure, or the age of the program, or even some other factor, that accounts for these findings. Larger SAP organizations might be intimidating to students and their families. A larger, more formal organization would work against the informality and ease of access that are a hallmark of SAPs. However, the higher levels of student satisfaction at the other three sites might just as easily be due to the newness of the programs. When new programs, with new personnel, are implemented, there is a high level of enthusiasm and support for the program that is typically not maintained over several years. The decline in enthusiasm is inevitable and could easily be the cause of the lowered levels of student satisfaction.

Another problem in identifying the best organizational structure is that this evaluation worked with a sample size of five, in terms of variations in the organizational model. Because of such a small sample size, it is impossible to identify what differences in program structure lead to greater success.

Key Issues and Recommendations Regarding the Development of SAPs in California

SWRL believes that there are several key issues, that if successfully faced, will strengthen the implementation of SAPs in California. These issues and observations are, in part, based on the findings of this report. However, they also are based on SWRL's involvement in the SAP movement in California over the past few years. These issues focus on what concrete actions a local school district could take to support the effective development of a SAP in their district. In this section, SWRL discuses these key issues, and provides some specific recommendations that

local school districts could adopt to best address these issues in their SAP.

Issue #1: **There appear to be several characteristics of the SAPs that contribute to their success. A SAP, incorporating these characteristics, is likely to be successful whatever its specific organizational form.**

SWRL believes that most any SAP program that incorporates the following characteristics will succeed. Instead of focusing on what kind of organizational structure to adopt, or whether to implement a "counselor-based" or "core-team" model, the most effective implementation may be the one that simply works to develop the following list of characteristics, however the SAP is finally organized.

SWRL Recommendations:

a. The SAP should develop a configuration of staff and services that is congruent with the social and political features of the program setting.
b. Students referred to the SAP receive services that are appropriate for their needs.
c. The SAP should provide an easy mechanism for students to seek help by self-referral.
d. The SAP should be able to identify and provide the most help to students who have the greatest need for services.
e. The SAP should offer a range of services, including group and individual counseling.
f. The SAP should be known as a program that maintains confidentiality, has a knowledgeable and helpful staff, and conducts interactions with students based on mutual trust, respect, and caring.

Issue #2: **For a SAP to work, there must be a philosophical perspective and commitment on the part of the district to operate the SAP as an integral part of their primary mission, not as an auxiliary elective.**

In most communities, the school district's primary mission is to prepare students to be functional young adults through their academic development—reading, writing, math, communication, etc. In addition to classroom academics, successful transition into young adulthood includes development of the student's self-discipline and self-reliance. An effective SAP serves this primary mission.

In this evaluation, successful SAPs were located in districts where school boards,

administration, staff, parents, and taxpayers understood that the school site is an appropriate and logical place to address student concerns. Further, it was assumed that if these concerns went unaddressed, this could impede the district's mission. That is, these districts believed that until student needs were addressed, the student could not fully succeed academically.

At the demonstration projects, when this commitment was weak, implementation of the SAP was hampered. As noted in Section 2, this was a problem in both San Dieguito and Mariposa. In San Dieguito, some school-site counselors specifically told the SAP Director that they did not share this commitment to addressing the students' needs; this caused some implementation problems at one school-site. In Mariposa, primarily because of ongoing political problems, support for the program at the school-site and district was weak and ultimately frustrated full implementation.

SWRL Recommendation:

1) **When implementing a SAP, the district and school-site should formally incorporate into their mission statement the idea that the school is a legitimate and logical place to address the social and psychological needs of the students.** Formally including this commitment into the mission statement is likely to promote a healthy debate about whether the school-site should involve itself in the student's life, beyond that of serving academic needs. This debate is essential. The objections and resistance that surface must be fairly and respectfully addressed. Unless everyone's concerns are answered, there will be persistent problems with implementation. Once a consensus is reached supporting the legitimacy of the SAP, implementation will be much more successful.

Issue #3: **In many ways, conducting a SAP is incompatible with many aspects of a school's functioning. For a SAP to flourish, ways must be found to minimize this incompatibility.**

Schools are organized, and school buildings are designed, to provide educational services to large groups of children, inside large classrooms, within specific time periods of the day. Schools are not organized to allow much individual flexibility, either in terms of how or when student learning is to occur.

SAP services, however, are organized around services to individuals; at most, only small groups of students are served at any one time. Further, to maximize the effectiveness of the SAP service providers, services need to be conducted throughout the school day, not just before or after school, or during lunch. This results in the necessity of "pull-out" programs, where SAP services are delivered to students who leave their regular classroom. This causes some problems for the

regular classroom teacher.

Also, because schools are designed to serve students grouped into classes of about 30, the physical plant of the school-site consists mainly of rooms capable of holding a large group of students at one time. In contrast to other organizations that provide individually based services (e.g., a hospital, lawyer's office), the average class room size is much larger and is inefficient for providing counseling services. This often leads to a shortage of appropriate room space needed to provide SAP services.

In short, a number of conflicts that exist between how schools are organized and how SAPs are organized. These conflicts exist around scheduling and providing the necessary physical resources to support the SAP.

SWRL Recommendation:

1) **As part of the initial SAP implementation process, potential conflicts between the SAP and regular school activities should be identified.** Having these issues out in the open and fully understood by everyone will help in two ways. First, if the issues are not systematically addressed in the beginning stages of implementation, the issues will be repeatedly encountered throughout implementation, causing unnecessary stress. As each phase of the SAP is implemented (e.g., initiating group services), the "battle" will have to be fought all over again. Making the fundamental issues apparent early on, and deciding on an overall general framework for solving the conflicts, will smooth implementation of the SAP. Unfortunately, SWRL has observed several SAPs (not the demonstration programs) where this problem has become a handicap. Because of the move toward school-based social services, even without the implementation of large numbers of SAPs, this problem will be encountered with increasing frequency throughout California.

Issue #4: **No matter how services are officially described, the students participating in the SAPs often are receiving counseling services. Recognizing this could help avoid potentially serious problems for SAPs.**

Whatever the label that is applied, SAPs are conducing both group and individual counseling on school campuses. At times they are dealing with very sensitive issues, such as family violence, serious depression, and sexuality. Students value confidentiality in SAP services, a sense of warmth and caring, and the ability to express their feelings in a safe place. All of these are essential characteristics of the counseling process. SWRL recognizes that school districts do not want to label SAP services as counseling because of liability and cost issues. However, that does

not change the objective fact that they are providing counseling services to the majority of the students participating in the SAP.

A failure to recognize the SAP services for what they are creates potential difficulties. For example, it is inevitable that not all student outcomes will be positive. Over a five-year period in California, some students will commit suicide, some will engage in violence, and others will drop out of school because of their personal or family problems. In these kinds of situations, distraught parents have been known to blame almost anyone for their child's failure. The SAP could become an easy target for a lawsuit. It would be easy to prove that a SAP was providing *de facto* counseling services to a student who suffered some negative outcome. Technically, since there would be no official acknowledgment that the district was supposed to be providing those services, the SAP would have far overstepped its appropriate service boundaries. Today in schools, the school nurse cannot even supply an aspirin without permission. The consequences of providing counseling services—which are most often regarded as another kind of medical procedure—without an appropriate legal and regulatory structure are serious.

By continuing to not acknowledge counseling services as being part of the SAP (i.e., by insisting that only assessment and referral occur), there also is the risk that SAPs will not receive the funding they deserve, that personnel will not receive sufficient or appropriate training, and that SAPs will, in general, always be "last in line" when it comes to the school budget. SAPs will only be appropriately supported when everyone recognizes clearly what SAPs are actually doing. SAPs are doing themselves a disservice by mislabeling their activities.

SWRL Recommendations:

1) The problems outlined above are too large for any one district to fully solve. Until regulatory clarification emerges regarding the status of SAPs, SWRL recommends that school districts take the following measures to avoid potential problems:
   a. Keep appropriate records, especially in cases with potentially serious problems or complications.
   b. Maintain appropriate supervision services for all counseling interns, students, or other para-professionals providing counseling services at the SAP. If appropriate supervision cannot be provided, serious consideration should be given as to whether the service should be provided at all.
   c. Develop safeguards to ensure that all reporting requirements to child abuse agencies are clearly and completely fulfilled.
   d. If possible, maintain close contacts with various support resources, such as psychologists, social workers, physicians, and others who could provide specialized services when needed.

Issue #5: **There is substantial variability in the professional training of those serving in SAPs. For SAPs to be best implemented, an effective set of standards for SAP personnel should be established.**

SWRL observed significant variation in the demonstration sites as to who provided services for students. In some cases, it was graduate-level interns. In other cases, it was credentialed school counselors; in other cases it was talented individuals without graduate education.

SWRL believes all of the personnel working at the demonstration sites were committed, well-trained, and adequate to their tasks. However, there are concerns about future SAP personnel should SAPs continue to expand throughout California. It is likely that, left without guidance, some districts will select personnel that are inadequately trained for their position. Particularly with significant budget difficulties, it becomes tempting to skimp on personnel costs, especially with a program that has no specific personnel standards or credential requirements.

SWRL Recommendations:

1) SWRL believes that SAP programs should develop their own internal training and/or educational standards for all SAP personnel within their district who deal with students.
2) The district developed standards should provide SAP personnel guidance regarding minimum training requirements, continuing education, and the use of paraprofessionals, graduate interns, and other individuals not formally trained in the behavioral sciences.

Issue #6: **Especially when a SAP is initiated, demand for services is likely to be heavy. In particular, students will be likely to self-refer themselves for personal problems that are serious. The SAP should be prepared for rapid start-up.**

In this evaluation there was a heavy demand for services when the SAPs were initiated. This demand caught many administrators, and some of the SAP Directors, by surprise. The initial heavy demand placed some strain on the SAPs. In their first year they had to cope with fine-tuning their program operations at the same time that they needed to provide an unexpectedly high level of services. In retrospect, it is logical that at those sites where there were few other social service options, there would be a great deal of pent-up demand which would be unleashed with the SAP start-up.

There was also the unexpected finding that the students who had the most serious personal problems tended to self-refer into the SAPs. The students who had the more minor problems

tended to be referred through other sources. In many ways this is gratifying to see. It indicates that the students placed a high level of trust in the operation of the programs, a finding consistent with the student ratings reported in Section 4. This finding also suggests that the traditional SAP emphasis of developing and implementing an elaborate staff-based identification and referral system is not as critical as believed. Because the students with the serious problems tended to self-refer, marketing SAP services directly to the students might be an effective mechanism for attracting students into the SAP. However, this does not mean that no staff-based identification and referral system is necessary. There will always be students who are in need of services, but, for one reason or another, do not find their own way into the SAP.

SWRL Recommendations:

1) Staff and administrators involved in start-up of the SAP should understand that there is likely to be a substantial, pent-up demand for services when the SAP begins operations. Being prepared for a large initial demand for services will help smooth implementation.
2) Because it was found that students with serious problems tended to self-refer themselves into the SAP, SWRL believes that the typical SAP could effectively market SAP services directly to students. This reduces, but does not eliminate, the need for the development and implementation of a staff-based identification and referral system.

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